

One of the six major monasteries of the Gelugpa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, Labrang was built in 1709. **Page 16**



Among the many great fish dishes found around the country is the humble Hanoi speciality *cha ca*. **Page 14**



This is not the first time IOC vice president Kim Un-yong has come under fire. **Page 13**

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# BEIJING TODAY

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## Custody Conflict

**When the plight of 52 AIDS orphans led to donations totaling over 1 million yuan, the local administration promptly built an orphanage to house the kids, and the money.**

By Hou Mingxin / Zeng Pengyu

**Z**hu Jinzhong, a farmer from Henan Province was "father" of a big family only two months ago. He provided a warm home to more than 50 children, most of them orphans who had lost their parents to AIDS.

Zhu's hometown, Shuangmiao, in Zhecheng County Henan Province, has been devastated by AIDS following the mass donation of blood in carelessly run local clinics, which spread HIV throughout the local population. Zhu also contracted the disease, but instead of just looking after himself, he opened a home for some of the many children orphaned by the epidemic.

Zhu's story was widely reported in the Chinese media last December (see our special report on December 12, pages 6 to 8). As a result of this media coverage, many organizations and individuals made donations to help Zhu continue his work. In total, Zhu received more than 1 million yuan in donations, an amount that could make a considerable difference to him and his "family." But now things have changed.

### Home shut down

In mid-January, Zhecheng County's civil administration ordered Zhu to shut down the children's home and transfer the 52 residents to Sunshine Home, an orphanage then still under construction by the administration. Zhu at first refused the request.

"They told me that my children's home was illegal and should be closed, giving the reason that I had not registered it at the local civil administration," Zhu told *Beijing Today* during a telephone interview Wednesday.

On February 3, three days after the completion of Sunshine Home, the local civil administration sent a bus and took most of the children.

After taking the children, the civil administration requested Zhu to transfer all the donated money to its account. Of the approximately 1.34 million yuan, one million had been donated by China Central Television (CCTV) after CCTV signed an agreement with the director of Shangqiu Civil Administration Bureau. According to the agreement, the 1 million would be spent on caring for the 52 children Zhu had been taking care of. There were no donation agreements between Zhu and the donors of the remaining 340,000 yuan.

"I have transferred all the money to them," Zhu told *Beijing Today*.

Sunshine Home refused other donated materials, including bicycles and quilts, which Zhu has given to the other orphans in his village.



A dormitory of the new orphanage, Director Yang Jiafu is on the right (above). A girl collects her belongings from Zhu Jinzhong's home to take to the new orphanage (below).

Photos by Zeng Pengyu



### A better environment

Located at Mengzhuang, a village three kilometers from Zhecheng, Sunshine Home is much larger than Zhu's house and is better equipped. Besides the dormitories, the new orphanage also has a boiler, an infirmary and a reading room. Two more buildings are under construction, and will be used as classrooms in the future.

In the past, Zhu's biggest concerns were the children's health and education. Now, the children will receive free education and medical treatment.

But the new home does not open its doors to just anyone. A Mrs. Li, resident of Shuangmiao, said she went to the new home on January 29 to ask them to take in her grandson, a 13-year old AIDS orphan. The orphanage refused, giving the reason that her grandson was not one of the 52 children taken care of by Zhu. Liang Tianying, another villager, and also an AIDS sufferer, suffered the same experience as Li, her 13-year old son was also refused by Sunshine Home.

When asked why Sunshine Home took Zhu's 52 children, Yang Jiafu, the director of the orphanage and an official of the

county civil administration, said without hesitation the reason was simply that Zhu's 52 children "came with the donation."

### Some questions

When asked whether Zhu could take in orphans in the future, a spokesperson for the administration replied, "Of course not. There are two reasons: first, Zhu himself is an AIDS sufferer; second, as an individual, his actions have contravened the adoption law. These kinds of things should be carried out by the civil administration, not by an individual, so his action is illegal."

However according to Professor Ma Yinan from the Law College of Beijing University, Zhu's act of providing a home for those children did not constitute adoption. He simply took care of the orphans. So he can not be said to be guilty of breaking the adoption law.

Wang Xiangrong, an official from the State Civil Administration's law office also said that Zhu's action had not broken the adoption law when interviewed by *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Regarding Zhu's home for the orphans, Professor Ma said the local civil administration had the right to supervise, manage and

even close down such a home if they consider it to be illegal.

At the same time, if the orphanage refused to take in those orphans, that action would also be illegal, he added.

As for the donated 340,000 yuan not covered by contract, both Ma and Wang said that since the original intention of the donors was to help the orphans, it should be transferred to where they are.

"But as there was no written agreement between the donors and Zhu, Zhu could refuse to hand the money over. And if he did so, his action could not be condemned as illegal," Wang added.

Zhu suggests that the donated money might be the real reason behind the closure of his home for the orphans. "Why did they not say I was breaking the law two years ago when I started to take orphans?" Zhu said to *Beijing Today*.

"When I was having the hardest time trying to take care of those children, I could get only 20 quilts from them. No one wanted to take them away from me then."

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## Regulation Bans Agreement Land Transfers

By Jerry Ho

On this Monday, the municipal government of Beijing declared illegal all transfers of land by agreement, except those strictly related to reconstruction of dilapidated houses. The regulation stipulates that all other land transfers must be transacted on the open market.

This amends an earlier regulation that exempted transfer agreements in five areas, namely for dilapidated houses, green belt areas, construction of small towns, national development zones and non-manufacturing hi-tech projects.

While the earlier order was intended to bring all land transactions into the open market, the five exceptions created loopholes that resulted in a wave of transfers of land by agreement.

As Ren Zhiqiang, president of Beijing Huayuan Group, pointed out in an interview with *21st Century Economic Report* on January 17, instead of buying land, real estate dealers could cooperate with companies or organizations that own resources under the five exceptions and obtain land by agreement. "Five exceptions were more than enough. Even one could do for a company to get all (the land) they want," commented another real estate dealer.

Nearly 90 million square meters of land was transferred by agreement during the 15 months from July 2002, when the earlier regulation took effect, to October 2003, compared to 98 million square meters in the ten years from 1992 to 2002. In contrast, only 16 pieces of land, amounting to less than 3 million square meters, had been sold openly at Beijing's Land Transaction Market by October 2003.

Pan Shiyi, president of Soho (China), commented to media, "Though it does not explicitly prescribe whether real estate dealers should make up for the lands that they had obtained by agreement, (the new regulation) is a big step toward an open transaction system. But the problem remains as to how the government would deal with the cases of land that fell into the hands of real estate dealers by agreement before the new regulation took effect."

One analyst commented, "The order helps standardize real estate market in Beijing. Only a few dozen of the more than 3,000 real estate companies in Beijing can be described as competent or standardized. The new regulation will surely change this and attract more investment from outside Beijing."

## Lantern Festival Stampede Leads to Tragedy

Party secretary of Miyun County Xia Qiang, revealed details of the stampede at Mihong Park on February 5 that left 37 people dead and 15 injured.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Xia express his deep condolences to all the victims and sympathy to all the relatives of the victims.

The stampede happened at 7:45 pm last Thursday in Mihong Park, Miyun, where people were celebrating the Lantern Festival. The festival falls on the 15th day of the first Chinese lunar month and marks the end of the Spring Festival.

According to Xia, at around

7:30 pm on the day of the accident, there were 30,000 to 40,000 people in the vicinity of the park and 4,000 to 5,000 people actually in the park to see the lanterns.

When residents near the west bank of the Chaobai River set off some fireworks, many visitors mistakenly believed that a fireworks display was beginning and there was a rush from the east bank to Yunhong Bridge. The 105.8-meter bridge is regarded as the best vantage point for viewing lanterns in the park.

One of the spectators rushing onto the bridge stumbled, and a stampede ensued, causing many others to fall and be trampled. Many of the victims suffocated to death.

Police and emergency workers immediately took steps to clear the crowd from the park to prevent the occurrence of further casualties. As well as the 37 people killed in the accident, 15 were subsequently hospitalized.

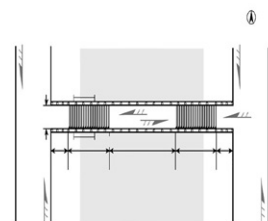
On being notified of the accident, President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao called for the utmost efforts to save the injured and ordered an investigation into its cause.

The State Council on Saturday dispatched an inspection team to Miyun headed by Wang Dexue, deputy director of the State Administration for Supervision of Production Safety.

Secretary of the Beijing Party Committee, Liu Qi, and acting mayor, Wang Qishan later visited the injured in hospital. It was later announced that the government would cover the medical bills of those injured in the accident.

(Sources: Xinhuanet)

*A diagram of Yunhong Bridge, where the tragedy occurred.*



*The 3-meter-wide bridge offers the best view of the lanterns in the park. The arrows indicate the direction the crowd was moving in.*

# Policy to Boost Farmers' Income

By Zhang Zhan

At the invitation of the State Council Information Office, Chen Xiwen, deputy director of the Central Economic Leading Team, gave an explanation of a document issued recently by the Central Committee on policies to boost the growth in incomes of farmers.

According to the document, there was a fall in grain output last year of 26.4 billion kilograms. At the same time, the overall value of agriculture increased by 25 percent on the year before. But due to a combination of a decrease in planting area and serious natural disasters, grain

production fell to 430.6 billion kilograms – 26.4 billion, or 5.8 percent less than the previous year. With grain demand at 455 billion kilograms, there was a shortfall of almost 25 billion kilograms.

Chen said that grain production has been falling since 1999. The reason is not only adjustments in the structure of the agriculture industry and supply and demand changes, but also lack of incentive for farmers to produce grain.

The document emphasizes encouragement and support for grain producers. According to a

Ministry of Agriculture plan for 2004, total production may reach 455 billion kilograms this year, indicating that the supply and demand gap is getting smaller.

From October last year, the prices of some agricultural products have been raised. Chen said that these price rises will benefit farmers and that their range of between 10 and 20 percent was within the ability of ordinary citizens to absorb. Related government departments should provide suitable aid policies and allow the price of agricultural products to reach a reasonable level, he said. This would have

a positive effect on farmers' incomes.

Meanwhile, Chen said that capital used to support the agriculture industry would reach 150 billion yuan this year, 30 billion more than last year. The increase will mainly flow to four areas: supporting tax reform, increasing central finance transfer payments; agriculture-related construction, especially in forestry and irrigation works; county-based social development, especially in education, training and hygiene in the countryside; and basic infrastructure and poverty relief.



A photographer at a duck farm in a village in the suburbs of Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, February 11, 2004. A total of 14 reporters from home and abroad arrived in Nanning Wednesday to cover the bird flu situation at Dingdang Town in Long'an County, where cases of bird flu were first reported in the Chinese mainland. This is the first journalist team organized by the Information Office of the State Council to arrive at the bird flu-hit area. (Xinhua Photo)

## Journalists Arrive in Guangxi for Bird Flu Coverage

Fourteen Chinese and overseas reporters Thursday morning arrived at Dingdang in Long'an County, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region where China's first outbreak of H5N1 avian flu was spotted.

The group is organized by the Information Office of the State Council. Fourteen reporters from

10 media organizations joined in the trip, including the Xinhua New Agency, Associated Press, Reuters, Kyodo from Japan, Straits Times from Singapore and Phoenix TV from Hong Kong, China.

On January 27, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture declared poultry deaths in Dingdang Town were resultant from H5N1 virus,

which became the first outbreak of H5N1 bird flu in China.

40 kilometers away from the Long'an County seat and 100 kilometers west of Nanning, capital of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Dingdang has a population of over 30,000, 90 percent of whom belong to the Zhuang nationality.

With sugar cane and cassava

as the major crops, the town does not boast many large-sized poultry breeding farms.

The duck farm where the bird flu cases were reported is beside the road from Long'an to Dingdang. The 32-year-old owner of the farm, Huang Shengde, made a living by raising ducks with his wife.

(Xinhua)

## Commercial Banks Get Green Light on Private and Foreign Capital

By Ju Ming

China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) announced on February 9 that commercial banks have been given the go-ahead to welcome private and foreign capital. Meanwhile, the CBRC issued "six instructions" to the soon-to-open Bohai Bank, and Zhejiang Commercial Bank, currently undergoing restructuring.

The aim of the CBRC is to make small and medium commercial banks operate more effectively and efficiently. According to the new rules, the government will no longer interfere with the regular performance of the banks, while the shareholders of the banks should include qualified overseas investors. Moreover, the banks should establish self-regulation

mechanisms, human resource management systems and employ fully competent staff.

According to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on February 10, Bohai Bank represents a key step in building Tianjin into a financial center of north China. Zhejiang Commercial Bank was founded jointly in 1993 by the Bank of China, Nanyang Commercial Bank (Hong Kong), the Bank of Communications and Zhengjiang International Trust and Investment corporation. Neither bank has announced who the foreign shareholders will be.

Currently there are eleven share-holding commercial banks in China. Among 112 city commercial banks, five of them have listed their shares.

## Shenzhen to Sell City-owned Assets

By Zhao Hongyi

China's first special economic zone, Shenzhen, is again taking the leading in economic reform, this time in the privatization of city-owned enterprises.

Xinhua reported on February 9 that the city government has initialized steps for the withdrawing of its shares from more than 30 local enterprises, mostly in the areas of real estate, hi-tech, infrastructures and finance.

The government will reduce its share holdings to under 30 percent in nine enterprises, including Accord Pharmaceuticals, Shenzhen Textiles and SAST Group. The shares will be divided for sale to individual employees and to capital investors.

Introducing overseas strategic investors is the major tool to privatize another seven enterprises, mainly in the area of infrastructure construction, maintenance and operations. The targeted enterprises include Shenzhen Power, Shenzhen Airport, Yantian Port and Shenzhen Expressways.

A further ten enterprises will be privatized by the joint means of introducing strategic investors and selling shares to local employees.

The aim, according to acting mayor Li Hongzhong, is to increase the market competitiveness of the enterprises, and to attract and introduce industrial giants and renowned brands to settle in the city, thus enhancing the city's economic strength.

### Public Security Review

Beijing police's 110 emergency hotline received 22.8 percent more calls this week than in the preceding week, and 77 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigations.

Break-ins and auto thefts accounted for the majority of reported crimes, at 82 percent.

Break-ins mostly occurred in Chaoyang, Haidian, Shijingshan and Fengtai districts at night and in the early mornings. The outskirts of Chaoyang, Haidian and Fengtai were the most common places for auto thefts to occur.

Most of the reported robberies were committed at Maizidian in Chaoyang and Dazhongsi in Haidian.

Police analysis shows the number of auto thefts and robberies has been rising recently, with drivers becoming a major target of criminals, who mostly commit crimes at gas stations and outside banks.

Police urge drivers to install reliable anti-theft devices in cars and not park in unguarded parking lots at night.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

## Hong Kong Banks to Launch RMB Services

By Zhang Bo

Banks from Hong Kong will be permitted to open renminbi (RMB) services in China's mainland including deposits and remittance from February 25, according to Zhou Xiaochuan, president of the People's Bank of China.

Accordingly, to facilitate economic, trade and labor exchanges between the mainland and Hong Kong, and realize an orderly flowback of RMB from circulation in Hong Kong, banks in Hong Kong are entitled by the State Council to open four types of RMB services; deposit, exchange, remittance and bankcard services.

The Bank of China (Hong Kong) sent related agreements to local banks regarding the launch of RMB services on February 4, and altogether 40 banks signed the agreement on February 9.

Some banks in Hong Kong, such as HSBC and Standard Chartered, will acquire permission to issue RMB credit cards by March or April, according to Wang Dongsheng, chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Banks.

## Minimum Wage Rules Set

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security last Thursday published on its website a special regulation on minimum wages, the first of its kind in China.

The regulation, to take effect March 1, divides wages into two types, monthly and hourly, respectively applying to full-time and non full-time workers.

The monthly minimum wage should take into account factors, such as the employee and dependents' minimum living costs, the urban resident consumption price index, social security and housing accumulation fund fees, average salary, economic development level and employment situation.

The hourly minimum wage should take into account the local monthly minimum wage, retirement pension and medical insurance fees, working conditions, work stability and welfare of non part-time workers.

Different standards between areas within a single province, municipality or autonomous region are permitted under the regulation.

Provincial-level labor and social security authorities should be responsible for setting and adjusting the minimum wage standard, and determining its application and related explanations.

The authority should consult local trade unions, enterprise unions or entrepreneur associations when setting the minimum wage standard and report their findings to the labor ministry, according to the regulation.

It also stipulates that employers who violate the regulation can be ordered to compensate for backpay and possibly be subject to administrative sanctions.

(Xinhua)

## CIRC Bans

## Handwritten Insurance

By Ju Ming

China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC) has banned the issuing of handwritten flight accident insurance policies. From March 1, flight accident insurance sold at airports and travel agencies must be printed out by computer.

Last year, the CIRC began urging insurance companies to develop forms of insurance other than the standard flight accident insurance. The measures were intended to break the monopoly of flight accident insurance and provide customers with a wider range of insurance options.

However handwritten insurance policies cannot guarantee the timely transfer of information into the database of the insurance company, and they are likely to cause losses of both tax and profits for the insurance company. They are also easier to forge.

Branches of CIRC in Kunming and five other cities have banned handwritten insurance policies since last year. During the recent Spring Festival, some handwriting insurance policies sold at some airports caused disruption in the market.

## Ban on Some Fowl Products Lifted

By Zhang Bo

A bulletin from China's Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine reveals that some countries and regions have agreed to lift bans on importing certain fowl products from China.

Xinhua reports that the administration has urged enterprises to keep informed regarding latest quarantine policies of importing countries and regions, in order to avoid or minimize losses resulting from bans.

According to the bulletin, South Korea has allowed the resumption of imports of eggs screened for designated pathogens and cooked fowl, while Singapore and Japan have withdrawn sanctions on canned and cooked fowl products.

Following outbreaks of avian flu in different regions in China in recent weeks, a number of countries implemented measures restricting or prohibiting the import of fowl products from China. By February 5, 41 countries and regions including Japan, South Korea and the European Union, had taken such measures.

# Tongren Hospital Moves into Hotel

By James Liu

On February 4, the neon signboard of the Beijing Jinlang Hotel in Chongwen District was taken down and replaced with the same sign that hangs over the Beijing Tongren Hospital across the street. The change marked the building's official opening as the hospital's eastern ward after Tongren purchased it in an auction last April for 336 million yuan.

Tongren's takeover of the former hotel has been hailed as a milestone in the reform of the state-run medical system launched in 1997.

Before reforms were implemented, state-owned hospitals like Tongren had little freedom in capital management and marketing. Besides being saddled with restrictive policies and regulations, hospitals had to get official permission before making significant financial moves, such as purchases of new facilities.

Huang Zhigang, assistant to the president of the hospital, told *Beijing Today* on Thursday that the purchase would have been impossible without the reform of the state medical system. "In the past, administrative procedures needed to get approval for this kind

of acquisition would have taken a month or longer, meaning we would have lost our chance to participate in the auction," he added.

Tongren Hospital, established 118 years ago, is a comprehensive hospital recognized for its strengths in the fields of ophthalmology, otolaryngology and cardiovascular disease treatment.

Last April, Tongren formed a joint venture, China's first medical care management institution, with five other companies. The venture has 200 million yuan of registered capital and its scope of business covers medical instruments, pharmaceutical research and development, hospital management and professional training and even extends into the hospitality industry and other commercial fields. According to Huang, the company plans to establish a national network of hospitals led by Beijing Tongren Hospital within five years.

"Though Tongren is a non-profit hospital, it can cooperate with other sides in different ways to meet the needs of the market. For example, we are building two joint venture hospitals in Nanjing and Kunming. Those two hospitals will use the



People from all over the country line up every day outside Tongren Hospital hoping to register for treatment.

name of Tongren, but will be commercial hospitals offering medical services to consumers from different levels," Huang said.

Locally, Tongren Hospital faces daily pressure, as patients from all over the country line up outside its doors as they await treatment. Huang noted, "Every day we receive complaints from patients about having limited

wards and patient capacity. We acquired the hotel to add capacity and we can put another 300 beds in there."

In May, Tongren will open another new branch in Beijing Economic Development Area (BDA) in southeastern Beijing. According to Huang, the hospital has invested nearly 400 million yuan in the new facility.

## Dairy Giants On Advertising Spree

By James Liu

Stiff competition in the domestic dairy market is driving many milk makers to launch aggressive and expensive advertising campaigns.

Inner Mongolian-based Mengniu Co., one of China's largest dairy producers, emerged as the biggest overall spender at the auction for ad time on China Central Television last November, shelling out 300 million yuan to pick up coveted slots. Rival dairy brand Yili Corp. came in second at that event, spending 200 million yuan.

Such massive investments, however, represent a relatively small portion of overall advertising spending within the dairy industry. Companies paid out a total of 2.6 billion yuan on ads and promotions in the first ten months of last year, according to figures compiled by AC Nielsen.

Those statistics also show that investment in advertising accounts for, on average, nearly 10 percent of all dairy companies' annual sales revenues. Fujian Province-based Changfu Milk Company went so far as to spend 30 percent of its sales income, or 92 million yuan, on ads in that 10-month period.

Expectations for rapid development are driving the rising competition in the industry. While the global average for annual per capita milk consumption is 100 kilograms, the figure is only 10 kilograms in China. *China Business Post* reported on February 7 that the Chinese dairy market is in its infancy and far less developed than other markets around the world.

Heavy advertising has already paid off for some domestic dairy companies, such as Mengniu. In 1999, the company had an annual total income of nearly 400 million yuan, but its sales shot up to 2.1 billion in 2002 and 5 billion in 2003. The company has set a goal of 10 billion yuan in income for this year, according to the *China Business Post* report.



China Postal Bank is likely to be spun off from the national postal bureau to enable its recovery and development.

Photos by Photocore

## Postal Saving Bank on Horizon

By James Liu

Efforts to transform the China Postal Savings and Remittance Bureau (CPSRB) into a commercial bank have been accelerated since Spring Festival. An unnamed employee in the finance department of Cisco System China confirmed that CPSRB had become a client of the company's to support its push to "set up a bank."

Sources from the China Post Bureau told *Beijing Business Today* that this year CPSRB, the fifth-largest deposit taking institution in China, would strengthen its reforms and launch RMB lending services. To date, CPSRB has only operated savings services and transfers all deposits to the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank. When the reform efforts are complete, China Postal Bank is likely to be spun off from

the China Post Bureau and become an independent organization.

However, CPSRB faces two major obstacles in its road to independence. One is the delicate matter of how to divide the closely connected nationwide departments, including offices, staff and facilities, of the bank and the China Post Bureau.

The other problem is the question of profits. CPSRB currently accounts for one third of China Post's total income, so its independence could pose a serious threat to the economic viability and future of the massive bureau.

Since August 1 last year, when the People's Bank of China decided to slash the interest rate on postal savings deposits from 4.131 percent to 1.89 percent, equal to that on deposits required for operating financial institutions at the central

bank, CPSRB has been registering huge losses. According to a series of reports in the *International Financial News* published since late last summer, prospects are even more grim given the current low level of yields in the inter-bank market.

In 1986, China's postal system started to accept savings deposits from citizens as part of the government's push to withdraw excess cash from circulation amid inflationary worries. In 1990, the central bank gave the postal savings system greater autonomy over the business and started to pay an interest rate for redeposited funds much higher than that for corresponding regular deposits, both as a means of encouragement and as compensation for the cost of building more outlets. To date, CPSRB has 800 billion yuan in deposited funds saved in the bank.

## Mixed Results at Temple Fairs

By Guo Yuandan

Temple fairs have for centuries been part of the traditional celebrations of Spring Festival in Beijing and around China, and in more recent years have become major money makers and venues for commercial activity.

The over 30 temple fairs held in the capital over this year's Spring Festival recorded varied levels of success, some drawing great crowds and impressive income, others losing money.

Organizers at the first temple fair to be held in the Chinese Ethnic Cultural Park, which ran

from January 19 to 28, invested 3 million yuan in the event, hoping to draw around 3 million visitors, around 1,000 retailers and bringing in up to 6 million yuan in revenues. Only around 30,000 people ended up going, however, and a mere 100 vendors set up shop. Ticket income was just 60,000 yuan, far below the line of profitability for organizers. Many vendors that participated are demanding the return of their space rental payments due to the low turn-out.

Sun Qiang, vice director of Chinese Ethnic Cultural Park Temple

Fair Organizational Committee, admitted, "It was quite cold during Spring Festival, and we didn't have much experience, as this was our first time to hold this kind of event."

Ticket prices may also have been a factor in the failure of the fair. Xu Juying, vice director of Daguanyu-an Park, the site of a successful temple fair this year, said, "Our entry tickets cost 8 yuan each, half the regular price, while we were running our temple fair. Tickets to the Ethnic Cultural Park were 20 yuan, which many people felt was too expensive."

## CCTV Ready for Restructuring

By Zhao Hongyi

China Central Television (CCTV) is preparing a thorough restructuring of its business framework with the intention of improving programming quality, according to a report in the *Financial Times* last Sunday. In the shift, some of the company's departments will be spun off into independent entities capable of producing and selling their own programs and perhaps viable for listing on overseas stock markets.

CCTV is this country's largest TV program producer and broadcaster, operating 13 channels and employing more than 8,000 people. The company's annual income reached 8 billion yuan last year.

"This will provide great opportunities for overseas investors interested in the Chinese mainland's TV industry," said Chen Hong, director general of CCTV's general editing department,

as quoted in the *Financial Times* article.

The network's popular sports channel is likely to be the first to undergo this treatment. Ideally, that department will be transformed into an independent producer of sports programming and sell its products to CCTV.

Overseas investors will be allowed to hold shares in such spin-off companies, and CCTV management hopes foreign cooperation will help improve the quality of domestically-produced programs.

Implementation of this ambitious plan, however, will take time. Chen estimated that it would be at least three years before things were on track.

"Rumors (about the reform) have already put great pressure on us," Mu Li, a program producer under CCTV's news department, told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

## Steelmaker Inks Deal with Oil Giant

By James Liu

Four subsidiaries under Shanghai Baosteel Group Corp., China's largest and most profitable steelmaker, will provide more than 200,000 tons of steel to China Petrochemical Corp. this year, Baosteel announced in a press release on Wednesday.

Baosteel did not disclose the value of the contract and no comment on the deal has been issued by China Petrochemical. The two giant companies have also agreed to team up in the research and development of new steel products.

The four companies un-

der Baosteel will supply steel products, mostly for use in constructing oil pipelines and crude oil tanks, to China Petrochemical, the parent of China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, better known as Sinopec. At present, the price of steel for use in oil pipelines is around 4,800 yuan per ton.

Last year, Sinopec Group purchased around 380,000 tons of steel products, around 320,000 tons of which came from the domestic market. Baosteel provided 130,000 tons of steel to the oil company, accounting for 40 percent of Sinopec Group's domestic procurement.

## Nokia to Set Up New JV

Nokia has announced plans to set up a new joint venture in the capital one year into reorganizing its China business as it shoots to become the top brand of cell phones in this country.

Vice President of Nokia Network (China) He Qingyuan said on February 9 that Nokia had signed merger documents with its four established local joint ventures, two cell phone producers and two telecommunications

equipment manufacturers, and was awaiting government approval before establishing the new venture.

Nokia has not released detailed information on the shareholding structure of the new venture, but some insiders have speculated the Finnish company must have increased its stake in order to be able to have absolute say in unifying market strategy this year.

(Xinhua)

## Nestle Takes Wraps off New Ice Creams

By Chen Ying

A news conference for the launch of Nestle's new line of ice cream products for 2004 was held at the Kempinski Hotel Tuesday afternoon.

At the event, the company showed 14 new frozen products and promised to debut all the items in the new line before February 20.

Among the unveiled products were the cheese-flavored Drumstick cone, X-Baopo Crunch, X-Lili Crunch and X-Xuan Feng Crunch. X-crunch bars were



a smash hit with Chinese teens in 2003.

Following the recent acquisitions of American ice cream makers Haagen Dazs and Dreyer's and Swiss brand Movenpick, Nestle has become the world's top ice cream manufacturer.

## Visa Sponsors Chinese Women's Hockey

By Su Wei

Visa International and the Chinese national women's field hockey team signed an agreement this Thursday afternoon for the credit card company and sponsor of the International Olympic Committee to become the squad's first official partner.

Albert Shiung, vice president of Visa Asian Pacific, said at a press conference

held for the agreement that his company plans to market the team worldwide and help support the women as they strive for glory at this year's Olympics in Athens.

The same day, Visa International kicked off another program called "Go China, Visa Team" intended to provide support to other Chinese sports teams.

# G7 Reaches Dollar Compromise



Protestors against globalization gathered outside the G7 finance ministers summit. AFP Photo

Boca Raton, Florida, February 7 (Canadian Press) - The United States and other leading world economic powers softened differences Saturday over whether to let the US dollar fall freely under market pressure or prop it up with government intervention.

The US administration won support for retention of language sup-

porting "more flexibility" in exchange markets, a phrase first used by the G7 wealthy countries last September.

The G7 endorsement of flexibility has been interpreted by currency traders as giving them a green light to push the exchange value of the dollar lower without fear the US or other members of G7 would try to fight the moves with massive government intervention to brake the dollar's decline.

The US administration is counting on a declining value of the dollar to boost US exports. Stronger export sales are expected to lift the fortunes of battered US manufacturing companies, who have been forced to lay off 2.8 million workers over the last three-and-a-half years.

But to meet complaints of European countries that the dollar's decline has been too rapid and too severe and is threatening their companies' export sales, G7 inserted a new phrase expressing concerns about "excess volatility and disorderly markets."

Europe hopes that phrase will serve as a warning that some countries may be willing to intervene in currency markets to fight too large a decline in the dollar's value in coming months.

The G7 countries - the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Britain and Italy - also proclaimed the global economic recovery has "strengthened significantly" in recent months.

## Analyst's Take:

*The US dollar has accumulated huge pressure for devaluation in the past two decades. The poor performance of US budget and external trade balances, together with the political demand for more exports and jobs in the year of a presidential election, are the major factors leading to the Bush administration's choice for a weak dollar.*

*The G7 finance ministers' meeting, in fact, reached no agreement on stopping the slide of the dollar. That explains why the dollar is still in a weak position.*

*But considering the 3.7 percent growth of US economy last year and the end of the election later this year, the dollar might come to a turning point, quite possibly in the third or fourth quarter. The rebound, if it happens, will be quite forceable.*

— **Yuan Yaodong, senior researcher, Institute of International Finance Studies, Bank of China**

## China Denies Revaluation Rumors

Beijing, February 9 (Xinhuanet) - China has no specific plans or timetable to reform its foreign exchange system, a central bank spokesman said on February 9, denying a weekend report in the local China Business Post that the value of the Chinese yuan will be raised by 5 percent in March.

"This is not the central bank's decision," the spokesman for the People's Bank of China told Dow Jones Newswires.

"We have no specific plans for renminbi changes, and no timetable," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The renminbi is pegged at about 8.28 yuan per US dollar. After a 5 percent revaluation, one US dollar would buy 7.887 yuan, compared with 8.277 at the current exchange rate.

The People's Bank of China has repeatedly stressed that the country would keep a basically stable exchange rate as part of its monetary policy.

But many foreign economists do not agree. Goldman Sachs said in a recent report that it expects an initial one-off renminbi revaluation of 2.5 percent against the US dollar in the first quarter of 2004.

The company also said it expects China to peg the renminbi to a basket of currencies instead of linking it directly to the greenback.



Visitors walk on Main Street towards the Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland in Anaheim, California. (Reuters Photo)

## Comcast Bids for Disney

Orlando, Florida, February 12 (AP) - US cable television giant Comcast Corp. made a surprise bid for Walt Disney Co. at a price of \$54 billion. If successful, the deal would make Comcast one of the world's largest media companies, combining Disney's film studio, ABC television network, ESPN sports network and theme parks with Comcast's 21 million cable subscribers.

(Gary Gentile)

## Air France Cleared for Takeover

Brussels, February 11 (Reuters) - Air France, nearly grounded in a near miss with bankruptcy a decade ago, was cleared by Brussels and Washington on Wednesday to take over Dutch carrier KLM and create the world's highest-flying airline group in terms of revenue.

Air France is spearheading an expected move towards consolidation in Europe's crowded airline sector. The new Air France-KLM combination will move ahead of Japan Airlines System Corp. as the largest airlines group by revenue and rank third behind American Airlines and United Airlines in passenger traffic.

(David Lawsky)

## Eurotunnel Reports Big Loss

Paris, February 9 (AP) - British-French tunnel operator Eurotunnel reported a loss of 1.89 billion euros (\$2.36 billion) for 2003.

Laboring under high debt, Eurotunnel said it needs to refinance some of its 9 billion euros (\$11.25 billion) debt and appealed to the countries' governments to help boost traffic with a rate cut for rail customers.

(Jamey Keaten)

## PeopleSoft Wins Battle

San Francisco, February 11 (AP) - The US Justice Department earlier this week accepted PeopleSoft's reasons for rejecting Oracle's \$9.4 billion hostile takeover bid, namely that the proposed deal would damage competition in the \$20 billion market for business applications software.

But Oracle said it was not discouraged by the ruling. PeopleSoft's shares declined another 19 cents to close at \$21.50 on the Nasdaq Stock Market, where Oracle's shares gained 31 cents to close at \$13.70.

(Michael Liedtke)

## South Korea's First Cosmonaut

Tokyo, February 11 (RIA-Novosti) -- South Korea intends to spend 13 million dollars to dispatch its first spaceman on Russia's space ship Soyuz in 2007.

South Korea chose Soyuz after the US Columbia space ship crashed in February 2003.

A detailed plan of preparations for the flight will be drawn up in Seoul this year, and up to ten candidates will be sent to Russia for training in 2005.

## US Scolds OPEC Cuts

Algiers, February 10 (Reuters) - OPEC on Tuesday announced a surprise cut of 1.5 million barrels in oil supplies from April, lowering daily production from 25 million to 23.5 million barrels.

In a strong warning to the cartel, US Treasury Secretary John Snow said any decrease in crude oil output by OPEC producers would be "regrettable," and would effectively be a tax on American consumers.

(Peg Mackey and Mona Megalli)

# Greenspan Foresees Sustained Growth



Washington, February 11 (AFP) - US Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan said the odds are tipped in favor of a jobs-rich, sustained economic expansion in the United States but he raised alarm over the spiraling deficit.

Greenspan presented a twice-yearly report on monetary policy, which upgraded the economic growth outlook for 2004 to 4.5 to 5.0 percent in the last quarter, up from last year's forecast of 3.75 to 4.75 percent growth.

But the powerful central bank chief said the record budget deficit, potential dynamite in an election year, could be a menace even in the short term. (AFP Photo)

## Taking on Wintel

Hong Kong, February 7 (Reuters) - Hong Kong's Culturecom Holdings has combined its Chinese-friendly V-Dragon central processing unit (CPU) with the open-source Linux operating system.

The plan is to take on the dominant "Wintel" combination of PCs that run on Microsoft Windows software using Intel CPUs.

In its drive to take on Wintel, Culturecom has found powerful allies in IBM, which is making and supporting the new chips, and the Chinese government, which is promoting Linux as a cheaper alternative to Windows.

The V-Dragon chips have scored some initial success since hitting the market last summer, with 1.5 million to 2 million units expected to ship this year, said Benjamin Lau, senior vice president and corporate strategist.

The chips sell for \$15 to \$30 each on average, well below the cost of a comparable Intel chip with Windows software.

"We want to make sure the price can come down, so we've shied away from any Wintel peripherals," he said.

Culturecom's two biggest orders to date have come from Taiwanese speaker maker Orient Semiconductor Electronics, for 1 million units over two years, and China's Datang Telecom & Tech, for 300,000 over a year, he said.

Culturecom's CPUs come with Chinese character capability and Linux embedded in the chips.

Intel chips now account for nearly 90 percent of the China PC market, while Windows accounts for the vast majority of PC-based operating systems. The country is now the world's No. 2 PC market, with 13.3 million units sold last year.

China is trying to address the problem of rampant piracy in its computer industry partly by promoting the use of Linux, a system that is technically free and avail-

able to anyone.

Rather than take on big PC makers that mostly use Intel chips and Windows software, Culturecom will initially target the market for customized computers used for functions such as accounting and administration, Lau said. He added that such computers now outsell traditional PCs by a factor of five worldwide.

Datang plans to use the chips in accounting computers, while Orient Semiconductor will use them in home-based entertainment centers that combine functions like DVD players with traditional computing.

"It can be used for PCs, but for us to find success...for the first two years we are going after the specialized device market," he said. "PCs are a more sophisticated market."

## Media Report:

*Invented and produced in China, the V-Dragon CPU will bring chip prices down to \$20-\$35 and PC prices to \$200-\$250.*

*The reason behind the dramatic price decrease is, firstly, the use of Linux, an open source code.*

*Secondly, the high fees charged by the dominant chip makers increase the price of PCs worldwide. It's thought the total cost in the production of a PC requires 5% on raw materials, 3% on manufacturing, 12% on staff, and 70% on fees such as licensing, patent use and manufacturing certificates.*

*Cheap computers, priced at 2,000-3,000 yuan, have great market potential both in China and the world. More importantly, the new chip, though not as advanced or sophisticated as Intel's products, has won recognition and cooperation from a number of PC manufacturers from the Chinese mainland, Taiwan and the US.*

— **Information Times, February 11**

## RyanAir's Wings Clipped

Brussels, February 3 (AFP) - The European Commission has found RyanAir guilty of receiving millions of euros in illegal state aid in a high-profile ruling that the Irish carrier warned spelt "disaster" for low-cost air travel in Europe.

The budget airline's combative chief executive, Michael O'Leary, decried the commission as "the evil empire" and vowed to appeal to the EU's top court.

He warned that RyanAir might scale down its operations at Charleroi airport, south of Brussels, if its court appeal fails. But other no-frills operations played down the impact of the long-awaited ruling by the EU executive body.

The commission said 25-30 percent of the 15 million euros (\$19 million) given to RyanAir by the Wallonia regional government, which owns Charleroi, amounted to illegal state aid.

EU transport commissioner Loyola de Palacio said the eventual cost was likely to translate into an extra six to eight euros on a RyanAir ticket.

But she insisted that Brussels was not endangering the future of low-cost air travel, a viewpoint backed by RyanAir's no-frills rivals.



AFP Photo

"All players in the same arena must be able to play by the same ground rules," the Spanish commissioner said in a statement.

RyanAir, the commission ruled, had benefited unfairly from secret clauses in its contract with the authorities in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium which has suffered years of industrial decline.

Those clauses enabled RyanAir to receive steep discounts on landing fees and ground-handling charges, as well as providing help to meet the costs of marketing and crew training.

## Analyst's Take:

*Considering the cheap price, 'red-eye flights' have great market potential in China. In fact, a number of airlines already operate such flights, particularly the domestic lines.*

*The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has been quite cautious in approving the late night 'red-eye flights', worrying over the potential risks. But as management skills and market conditions improve, the number of cheap flights will increase as market demand grows.*

*The core issue we are facing in China today is building the market, as air flights are still a luxury form of travel to many Chinese.*

*In addition, we need to open more routes and more commercial flights, and purchase more efficient airplanes before launching more 'red-eye flights'.*

— **Zhang Linli, director, Air Transportation Management Office, CAAC**

# Tian'anmen Square to Get New Milestone

By Zhao Hongyi

A new structure will be built on Tian'anmen Square in the heart of Beijing. Unlike the monuments and grand halls that surround the square, this new landmark will be flat and less than two meters square, quietly marking the starting point of China's national highways.

The idea for installing this

marker came out years ago, and the campaign to cull design ideas was launched in November 2001 by an organizing committee formed by the Ministry of Communications and Beijing Municipal Government.

A total of 64 designs were considered during that first search, but the ultimate decision-makers, the State Council, were not satisfied with any of

the proposals and the search for a proper design continues.

At a meeting on the initiative last week, the State Council issued written requirements that "the milestone should be eye-catching, representative and coherent with the status quo of the buildings on the square."

By the end of the meeting, the design for the milestone

was set as a 1.6-meter-square tile embedded in the ground of Tian'anmen Square.

By the end of last year, 68 national highways had been built in this country, though only 11 technically have starting points in Beijing.

"The chaotic and confusing layout of the national highway structure must be corrected," stressed Dai Dongchang, presi-

dent of the Institute of Transportation Network Programming under the Ministry of Communication and head of the organizing committee.

The committee is again soliciting designs from the public in a new campaign that will run through March 15. The milestone is scheduled to be installed before the start of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.



Photo by Chen Yu

## Rows of Romantic Roses

By Chen Ying

The Beijing Botanical Garden at the Fragrant Hills finished the creation of a massive arrangement of real roses at its largest greenhouse on Thursday in time for Valentine's Day celebrations. The spread, titled "Blue Love" is composed from 9,999 red, 999 blue, 99 yellow and nine white roses.

The piece is divided into three sections titled "Romantic Love", "Moon Represents My Heart" and "Stars Know My Heart."

The first 99 couples celebrating their golden, or fiftieth, anniversaries this year to contact the arboretum can visit for free on Valentine's Day, this Saturday. Free tickets can be reserved by called 6259 1283.

## Super Nannies Start Work

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Six people from Hebei Province who arrived in Shanghai on February 2 may usher in a new era for domestic help in this country, as they all have accredited diplomas certifying their status as qualified housekeepers.

On February 4, Wu Kun became the first of the six to start work at the home of a Shanghai resident. They all hold diplomas in household management from the Hebei Industrial Vocational School and headed to Shanghai under contracts signed with Shanghai Laibang Household Management.

*Beijing Today* reported on these events on the front page last week. The certified housekeepers have become nationwide media sensations because before their appearance, few domestic workers in China underwent any training, to say nothing of holding diplomas. To date, all six have found jobs and many Shanghai residents are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the next group.

According to a report in the *Shanghai Morning Post* on February 5, Wu was the first to start working because two days into a one-week training course all six were attending in Shanghai, her new employer, a middle school teacher of Chinese, expressed his desperate need for help at home. The teacher agreed to raise her monthly salary from the contracted 1,800 yuan to 2,000 yuan because he was very pleased with her writing skills.

Wu's duties at her new job far surpass the typical tasks given to household help. From day one, her employer has expected her to help him deal with students' homework and other papers and even provide tutoring to pupils that come to his home on weekends and during school vacations. He chose Wu after asking all six of the housekeepers to write essays on a given topic.

For her part, Wu said she had encountered a few unexpected problems since taking the job. She is a skilled cook, but struggles to make or appreciate Shanghai dishes, which she called bland compared to Hebei-style fare. On her first day, the teacher even hired a short-order cook to prepare his meals. "I guess I should go and buy a cookbook (on Shanghai dishes)," Wu confessed to the *Shanghai Morning Post*.

Also on her first day, Wu was given the task of preparing math lessons she was going to cover in her tutoring sessions. Having no teaching experience and finding nothing particularly challenging in the provided textbook, she made no notes. The teacher criticized her for not preparing because he wanted to make sure her tutorial sessions would not be boring for his students.

Though that first day did not go very smoothly, Wu is confident she can get the hang of the challenging job. "I think it will take me about a month to get used to life here," she told the *Shanghai Morning Post's* reporter while cooking, spatula in hand.

According to a follow-up report in that paper, because they have all had similar culinary problems, the five other graduates have been enrolled in a cooking class and will officially start work on Sunday.



Guo Cairu's hair has gone back to black since he started practicing wushu every day at the age of 80.

# Centenarian Finds Elder Games

By Guo Yuandan

Nanjing native Guo Cairu, 104, announced last week that he is working to establish organized competitions of traditional sports among elderly citizens of some major Chinese

cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan. The games will kick-off on April 1 and should run continuously until the start of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Traditional Chinese non-contact martial arts, called *wushu*,

such as tai chi and *bagua*, will be among the sports highlighted in the events, which are open to men and women from China and abroad 75 or older.

Guo first gained national recognition last year when he

participated in the Olympic promotion film produced by famed director Zhang Yimou in August 2003.

The centenarian was born on April 1, 1901, but only began consistently exercising by practicing wushu at the age of 80. He has become a master of tai chi and even developed his own form. After he turned 100,

Guo's hair actually went back from white to its former black, a change he attributes to his active exercise regime.

The elder games are intended as a warm-up act and welcome to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as well as a means for promoting wushu in China and encouraging its recognition as an Olympic sport.

Photo by Tong Ming

## Abducted Actor Gets Lesson in Real Crime

By Hans Leu

Popular star of the silver screen Wu Ruopu endured a dangerous experience straight out of one of his police drama shows when he was kidnapped and held for 16 hours on February 3.

Wu was abducted by three men posing as police in a parking lot outside a bar opposite the Zhaolong Hotel in Chaoyang District. "They showed me their police badges and said that I was involved in a hit and run case," Wu told *Beijing Youth Daily* on February 5. "I showed them my driver's license and said there must be something wrong."

The three men insisted Wu go with them in their car. The actor refused and demanded they prove their identities as police officers. "I told them that if they called 110 and let me talk to the police, I'd get into their police car," Wu said.

The remarks visibly angered the men, who tried to force handcuffs around Wu's wrists but the actor and his friends fought back.

"In the end, the guys took out guns," said Wu. "I served in the army, and I knew the guns were real." Finally, he acquiesced and got into the back seat of the Santana sedan. One of the assailants sat next to Wu and pushed his head down to his knees as they drove off.

After a reckless, 40-minute flight from the scene, the car stopped before a small house on the outskirts of the city. Wu was confined inside, along with another young man who had already been held in the house for two days.

Inside, the men admitted they were not police and were going to hold Wu for ransom. The kidnappers allowed Wu to call a friend to try to organize the money, and that friend immediately reported the crime to the police. Wu later said he was confident that his friend would do so, but as he sat in the house, was worried about whether the police could locate him before the kidnappers lost patience.

The police suddenly burst through the door to the cottage at around 11 pm that night. They completely surprised the kidnappers, who were quickly disarmed and taken into custody.

"They were holding their guns," recalled Wu. "But they had no real chance to resist, the police were too fast." When he was emerged from the house, Wu found the front yard swarming with police.

"I had no idea they were there," he confessed. "In my latest role for TV, I played a cop who rescued a hostage. Now I know that reality is far different from what we did in that show."



Wu Ruopu

Photo by Gloom

Local media reports on the case have raised questions about what really happened. Some articles quoted acquaintances of Wu's as saying that the kidnappers were likely members of underworld organizations, and the kidnapping organized by one of the many former colleagues and others angered by Wu's bad temper over the years. A large body of netizens speculated that there must have been a deeper scandal behind the events.

Undaunted by such public doubts, Wu said he planned to script and produce a movie based on his experience.

In a *Beijing Youth Daily* report on February 7 an unnamed source from the forestry bureau of Miyun County called the reappearance of the macaque a sure sign of the improvement of the local environment and citizens' consciousness regarding the protection of wild animals.

Chen Wei, professor of biology at Capital Normal University, doubts such claims and is convinced the macaques were raised in captivity and escaped. He came to that conclusion because only two monkeys have appeared, while they naturally live in larger groups, these macaques are not shy of humans as wild animals are, and primarily because the species was hunted to acknowledged disappearance last century.

## Monkeys Return to Miyun

By Zhang Ran

Two macaques, the only species of monkey native to Beijing municipality, have made surprise appearances this year in Yaoqiaoyu Village, Xinchengzi Town of Miyun County. A century ago, the population of this wild monkey, now considered a second-level nationally protected animal, was small and isolated to Wulingshan Mountain and they have long been considered absent from the local ecology.

The monkeys have become familiar with the residents of Yaoqiaoyu village, pilfering a few sweet potatoes from local farmers and even feeling

comfortable enough to eat from people's hands. The macaques are especially popular among the village children, who take post every day to greet their new friends. "Every morning I wait here with fruit and biscuits," said third-grade student Liu Qiang.

According to the *Record of Beijing Wild Animal's History*, macaques were not uncommon in the 1950s and 1960s, but were thought to have disappeared from the municipality when none were found during three surveys conducted by the Institution of Animal Studies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences since the 1970s.

By Chen Ying

A factory in Dalian, Liaoning Province has been attracting an unusual amount of attention both from Chinese and foreign reporters recently thanks to its particular speciality — preserved corpses.

The factory was established in August 1999 by German anatomist Gunther von Hagens. In 1977, von Hagens invented the plastination technique, a method of preserving human bodies in a durable and lifelike manner for study, research, and even exhibition purposes.



Gunther von Hagens

Though the initial intent was purely medical, von Hagens started to hold exhibitions titled “Body Worlds” worldwide in 1997. Since the first exhibition in Mannheim, Germany in 1997, shows have been held around the world, pulling in more than 13.5 million people. Shows are running now in Frankfurt, Germany, and Singapore. The factory in Dalian was set up to process bodies for the shows.

According to the Body Worlds exhibition official homepage (<http://www.bodyworlds.com>), the theme of the exhibition is to view corpses and the human body’s interior, not only for doctors and students but also for the general public. The exhibition claims to educate and enlighten people about the workings and the beauty of the design of the human body.

The idea has always been controversial, that’s been part of its success. Von Hagens has also courted the public eye, holding a sell-out public autopsy in Britain two years ago. Thanks to media reports about his Dalian factory recently, ordinary Chinese got to know more about it. It’s hard enough for Chinese people to accept, given China’s tradition of showing respect for the dead, but rumors of scurrilous practices in acquiring fresh bodies are also starting to circle.

*Beijing Today* tried to contact von Hagens but failed. “In view of the very complex situation in China and in consideration of the fact that the recent discussion has reached a political dimension, Gunther von Hagens has decided not to give any further interviews to the Chinese media for the time being,” Karen Schuessler-Leipold, General Manager of the Institute of Plastination, told *Beijing Today* this Tuesday.

Beijing Today contacted two people who have visited the Body Worlds exhibition and asked what they thought about it.

**Dr. Sarah Wilson, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London**

I saw the show in London. The venue was near where I lived and near where Jack the Ripper killed his victims in Victorian times. Of course the show had a lot of hype.

But it so happens that I was on the scientific committee of the important French exhibition “l’Ame au Corps (the soul in the body) arts et sciences 1792-1992” and was extremely familiar with the relationship between art and medicine from the 18th century onwards, including the history of dissection.

So van Hagens wasn’t at all shocking to me. It was a sensation at first with huge queues, but then it became very empty. The queues only started again after an advertising campaign and von Hagens’ notorious live-on-TV dissection, before the end of the show. But the show drew millions of visitors in Tokyo.

The corpses were relatively beautiful but leaving in the eyes, and in one instance a human tattoo was macabre. Many people commented that the excellent state of health of the corpses suggested something fishy, that maybe they were the bodies of

# Dr. Death Comes to China

German anatomist’s corpse exhibitions cause controversy worldwide



You can download wallpapers of the exhibition from the official homepage.



## Hard to Accept?

By Chen Ying

Beijing Natural History Museum is currently holding a plastination exhibition titled “the Mystery of the Human Body” till March 30. The show displays six whole body specimens and nearly 200-organ specimens.

All the specimens were provided by the Medical College of Dalian University. Though the exhibition displays are plastinates produced on the basis of von Hagens’ technique, he declared he was not involved in this exhibition.

“We hope this exhibition can help give visitors a deeper understanding of human beings and animals. Only when people know about death can they know about life,” said Shen Jingwu, vice curator of the museum.

But experts still have their own opinions. “Even a corpse should have dignity because it was once alive. It deserves to be respected. A commercial activity like this is disrespectful to life, even to a corpse,” scientist Qiu Zongren told *Beijing Morning Post*.

“It’s impossible for such an exhibition to be popular in China. Most Chinese still can’t accept such an idea from the point of view of ethics,” said Chen Tianmin, an anatomist.

A young Beijinger, requesting anonymity, told *Beijing Today* that he once visited Gunther von Hagens’ website. “The first impression for me was shocking. I don’t think it’s necessary to investigate our bodies or death in this kind of extreme way. It’s enough to get this knowledge from books and TV programs,” he said.

“I think the exhibition is good in terms of its detailed explanations and illustrations besides the specimens. It’s scientific,” said student Guo Mingxin who visited the exhibition yesterday. “I just think it’s a way of understanding more about our bodies,” she added.

A woman in her 30s came to the exhibition with her five-year-old son yesterday afternoon. “Even though I’m a little bit scared, my son isn’t afraid at all,” the mother said. She said her son had also enjoyed an exhibit at the China Science and Technology Museum allowing people to walk through a model corridor just like walking from a human being’s mouth to their anus.



## German Anatomist’s Corpse Factory Blasted

By Audra Ang, Associated Press Writer

Hidden in a maze of factories in the heart of northeastern Chinese port city Dalian is the house Gunther von Hagens built — and, for many, a place where nightmares are created.

Inside von Hagens’ sprawling, well-guarded compound, behind a leaning metal fence pocked with holes, are more than 800 human beings — 200 of his staffers and 645 dead bodies in steel cases from almost a dozen nations.

Last month, media reports from von Hagens’ native Germany asserted that at least two of the corpses, both Chinese, had bullet holes in their skulls — the method China uses for execution. It’s a charge that von Hagens rejects vehemently, saying all his specimens were donated by people who signed releases.

“I absolutely prohibit and do not accept death penalty bodies,” von Hagens, a tall, thin man given to wearing a fedora, said this week during a rare tour of his Dalian facility.

But, he added, “Many things can happen. ... I cannot exclude that (possibility).”

Though authorities in Dalian have made no public allegations against the operation, it has drawn the attention of the Chinese media.

“Does the corpse factory have a trade secret?” asked the *Beijing Morning Post*.

“Investigation into the secrets of Dalian’s corpse processing plant,” read another in the *Beijing Evening News*.

Li Renzhen, a Dalian taxi driver, said, “I don’t know what they are doing in there. But according to Chinese tradition, we should show respect for dead bodies. If they are being used to make money, it’s unthinkable.”

The German weekly *Der Spiegel* said in January that von Hagens ran a “shabby business,” buying cheap corpses — including executed Chinese. A British paper, the *Daily Telegraph*, said German lawyers also were investigating whether von Hagens used executed Chinese prisoners.

Prosecutors in Heidelberg, Germany, are studying whether von Hagens committed human rights violations by using the

corpse of a person without obtaining consent while the person was living, spokeswoman Elke O’Donoghue said.

The allegations echoed charges from 2001, when von Hagens was accused of using a Russian prisoner’s body. Von Hagens said that corpse was a German who donated his body.

Von Hagens said his staff searched their cache of bodies after the *Der Spiegel* article appeared and found seven with “different kinds of head injuries.” He said he planned to incinerate those to be certain execution victims were not used.

“There is no case against me,” said von Hagens, 59. “Nobody accuses me ... of doing anything criminal, anything against the law.”

Critics, including the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, have denounced von Hagens’ work as disrespectful to the dead. He says he simply helps people understand their bodies.

In Frankfurt, authorities have warned parents not to allow children younger than 14 to view the exhibit, which they said, could “shock and frighten.” At a London show, a visitor took a hammer to one of the bodies on show — a man holding a liver — while another threw a blanket over the corpse of a pregnant woman, saying he could not bear to look at the fetus.

“It’s a very emotional topic,” acknowledged von Hagens, dubbed “Dr. Frankenstein” in November after performing Britain’s first public autopsy in more than 170 years. Even in Dalian, one of his employees jokingly referred to him as “Dr. Death.”

Each body requires up to 1,500 hours of work to prepare, von Hagens says. In their final plasticized state, the corpses are rubbery to the touch with a crystalline finish — the color of raw pork.

Von Hagens, too, is thinking these days — about how to quiet his critics without giving up his life’s endeavor.

“I’m sure I will survive this storm in the water glass as I have survived so many before,” von Hagens said. “I touch here a taboo, which is our body, and nothing is so near as our body is to us.”

He adds: “I know that I am innocent. This gives me a good feeling and good sleep every day.”



Inside the factory of death!

AP Photo

Russian or Chinese criminals who had been sentenced to the death penalty.

I’m only residually religious in the conventional sense. I don’t think it’s at all disrespectful to the dead if certain people want to leave their bodies to von Hagens. But if he is paying graverobbers to get him bodies or using criminals without the knowledge of their families, I think it’s extremely disrespectful.

**Tanja Schulz-hess, assistant of editor for Der Spiegel magazine in Germany**

I went to see the exhibition in Vienna a couple of years ago when it hadn’t received that much hype.

I was amazed. I was walking around in awe. Speechless. I never spent that much time in an exhibition. When I saw for example how blood vessels from a fat person look compared to those of a normal person I was surprised. I decided to treat my body better based on what I saw (I’ve lost 20 kg since going on a diet). I also saw a smoker’s lung next to a healthy one. It was ugly but impressive. It was the first time in my life I had the feeling of really understanding my body.

It totally opened my eyes. After the exhibition I thought:

Gosh, my body is a temple. How dare I disrespect it with bad food and not enough exercise.

But I can see that people with strong religious beliefs or weak stomachs might be offended by the display of a woman and her fetus. But that is how it is to be human. That is the bare truth. Why should information like that be restricted to doctors?

But Mr. Gunther von Hagens? Personally I think he is mad. Crazy. But he is also a genius for inventing this method of conservation of the body. Very creative, and with few inhibitions based on what other people might think. It is difficult to judge someone like that.

He may not respect other people’s ways of thinking, but he gave something very valuable, challenging and mind-opening to people which I think is a big gift to humanity.

But the ways he works to get the bodies and how to deal with them are more than questionable and should be monitored by somebody. He should not be able to get bodies from somewhere and use them as spare parts.

There are enough people who signed in after the exhibition to give their bodies after their death. He should work with resources like that.

By Su Wei

Nie Qun, 31-year-old project manager for a German company in Beijing, has an Audi, an IBM lap-top and a Nokia mobile phone, minimum accoutrements of China's new middle class. "Membership of a club, such as a gym, and regular medical check-ups, especially with a dentist, are also necessary for the middle class," she says. "That's the lifestyle I have."

Last month, the Institute of Sociology of China's Academy of Social Sciences published their research on the middle class in China. Between 2001 and 2002, the Institute surveyed 5,860 people aged between 16 and 70 from 12 provinces around China, trying to get a clearer picture of who these people are and who they think they are.

#### Class criteria

Li Chunling, a researcher at the institute, says there are four factors denoting membership of the middle class: occupation, income, consumption and class identity.

Less than 16% of the people interviewed had occupations that the institute classifies as middle class, such as the rank of government official, company managerial staff, private company entrepreneur or professional technician. "Business service clerks and industrial workers don't qualify, not even bosses of small sized enterprises," Li said.

She says it's hard to work out an income level for the middle class, but it starts somewhere around the top 25 percent of China's earners. There are also difficulties in determining a specific middle class consumption level. "China is not a mature society in terms of consumption," she said. But there are certain basics that every moderately affluent household should have, such as televisions, stereos and cars. Around 35% of the people interviewed were thus endowed.

However, nearly half of the people interviewed said they considered themselves members of the middle class, with just under 10% saying they were upper middle or even upper class. Government officials in particular were likely to identify themselves as middle class, followed by private company entrepreneurs and managerial staff.

#### Life of the middle class

Every morning Li Mei (pseudonym) drives her Audi to the beauty salon she opened two years ago near Jinsong, Chaoyang District, Beijing. Her husband, Zhang Ming (pseudonym), a general manager of a real estate company, also drives his Audi to work. The couple have a daughter studying at a prestigious junior middle school in Haidian District. "People admire us for being a typical middle class family. My husband has a successful career, my daughter is smart and gets good school marks, and I am still as pretty as before,"

# What's Your Status?



"So, Audi or Mercedes, which is better?"

Photo by Photocom

she says proudly.

Li graduated from Beijing Foreign Language University with a major in English 10 years ago and worked for a while as a public communications manager for an underwear firm and later as a sales manager for a cosmetics company.

Zhang graduated from Shanghai Jiaotong Communication University with a major in engineering. After three years working in a state-owned enterprise in Beijing as a department director, he was recruited by his current company. Three years ago he became an executive and last year he was elected general manager.

The couple now live in an apartment they purchased five years ago for nearly 800,000 yuan, with a mortgage of 3,700 yuan per month for 20 years.

Two years ago they had a total annual income of more than 200,000 yuan. "Money is not a concern for us," Zhang said. "Even if we were laid off now, we would not worry about living."

This year Zhang is to enroll in an executive MBA program at Beijing University costing 210,000 yuan and Li has enrolled in a five-month beauty training class costing 16,000 yuan. "We're

going on these courses not only because we need to keep up in such a highly competitive society but also because it can enlarge our social circle," Li said. Quite a number of her clients are people she got to know through a previous training program.

The couple consider their daughter as the focus of the family. They sent her to a private kindergarten and private primary school. They believe it was worth the money. "Both Chinese and English were taught there," Li says. Now every month they put 3,000 yuan towards a fund for their daughter's further education.

When the couple go out for dinner they usually choose restaurants in big hotels. "Conditions there are good. It is quiet enough to have a talk and you get thoughtful service," Zhang added.

Zhang likes swimming and playing golf and Li likes shopping. "I like Gucci and Chanel," says Li. "Around one third of my income is spent on clothes and cosmetics."

#### How many?

According to the research, if the factors are looked at separately, there would be 136.45 million people in China belonging to the mid-

dle class in terms of occupation, 211.12 million in terms of income, 300.36 million in terms of consumption and 401.63 million in terms of class identification.

"But can we say those numbers really stand for the number of people who are members of the middle class in China? The answer is definitely 'No!'" Li said.

She says someone cannot be considered to be in the middle class unless they meet the requirements of all the four factors. "Therefore, less than 4% of Chinese people can be called middle class, about 35 million in other words," Li said.

A scholar, who asked not to be named, told *Beijing Today* that the very idea of a middle class in China is nearly impossible to define. "I think there is no such class in China at the moment," he said. "Such a standard should be based on the development level of the country instead of trying to create a better image for the country or cater for the government." He said China was still a comparatively backward country even though it had experienced rapid growth in its economic and cultural development in the past 20 years. "Only when the average annual income

per person is between US \$10,000 and US \$50,000 can there be a middle class in China. Otherwise it's only a term for people who are just a step away from going hungry," he said.

Li Peilin, a researcher at the institute, says there are a lot of other issues which influence the development of a middle class that have not been solved in China, "Such as the reemployment of laid-off employees of state-owned enterprises, the poverty of over 30 million peasants and over 20 million people with the lowest social welfare. There's also the need for legal protection of the private property of citizens and their right to make choices in social and political life."

#### The way out

Yi Xianrong, an economist, says the forming of a middle class in China does not lie in education of the public or people's ability and wealth. "It lies in the system. A good system can make the poor rich and a bad system can make the rich poor," he said.

He mentions Fengjing Town, Huoqiu County, Anhui, as an example. About 1,100 peasants there got involved in CPU production and now have around

60% of the CPU market share in Zhongguancun, Beijing. "Some of them have made several million yuan," he said. "It is true that they did not have advantages to do business in such a hi-tech area due to the lack of sufficient education and funds. But they are in a highly competitive market, which has developed their potential."

Another example Yi mentions is a production team in Lulong County, Hebei. In the early 1980s, under a government program to boost rural output, 32 households were given machines worth a total of about 25,000 yuan to set up a paper box making factory. Ten years later the factory was worth more than 20 million yuan. "But the county government tried to control the factory, and the peasants resisted," Yi said. "The government was angry, so some of the peasants were arrested and the factory was sold."

Yi insists a system that can form a middle class should be one that expands the rights of the public to make a living instead of limiting and depriving their rights. "If people's wealth and their rights to make a living are limited, the economy can hardly keep growing," Yi said.

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By Su Wei

About 150 British cockle pickers returned to Morecambe Bay this Tuesday as police reopened the fishing grounds five days after 19 Chinese workers drowned in the bay when caught by rising tides. It's believed the workers were being paid to pick the prized shellfish by so-called "gangmasters" in the multi-million pound cockle industry. The bay is a notoriously dangerous area with constantly shifting sands and unpredictable tides.

Rescue workers found 16 survivors, five of whom were arrested in connection with the tragedy. Police also arrested two British men suspected of involvement. All have now been released on bail but will be required for further questioning.

The two local men, David Eden, 60, and his son, also called David, who run the Liverpool Bay Fishing Company, had been held on suspicion of manslaughter. The two have extensive interests in the fishing industry and are well known in Morecambe. They have been required to return to a Lancashire police station on April 12th.

Their lawyer, Tony Nelso, said this Wednesday that the two men had no involvement in the deaths of the cockle pickers last Thursday, and that they themselves had been threatened, possibly by cockle industry gangmasters.

#### Tragedy occurs

The first indication of trouble came at 9:30 pm last Thursday when someone dialed 999 and told police that between 23 and 25 people were stranded on the sands. Two Royal Air Force helicopters were immediately scrambled to help in the rescue.

A search was carried out by around 200 people including police from Lancashire and Cumbria, who were then joined by coastguards, mountain rescue teams with dogs and fire crews.

The first survivor was picked up within 45 minutes of the alarm being raised. Just after midnight three more were brought to shore and taken to Lancaster Royal Infirmary suffering from hypothermia. Then four others were found and taken to Lancaster police station. The other survivors had earlier managed to make it back to shore.

Just after 2:30 am last Friday the first body was spotted. "Then we found eight more, all dead. We were ferrying the bodies back, four a time," said Commander Harry Roberts, of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), last weekend. "There were bodies all over the sandbank." Winds were gusting

# Death in the UK

Police hunt gangs responsible for the death of Chinese immigrant workers

## About Morecambe Bay

The 120-square-mile Morecambe Bay is notoriously dangerous, known for its fast rising tides and quicksands. Since 1536, guides have been employed to lead people across the treacherous sands at Morecambe Bay safely. Today there is still an official guide for the walk across the sands.

The local government says the bay holds more than six million pounds (\$11.08 million) worth of cockles. The bay's high-quality cockles fetch 10 pounds per 50kg bag for the employer and a picker can fill one in an hour.

On 15 December last year, there was a warning sign when 23 Chinese cockle pickers were stranded at Aldingham, on the opposite side of the bay.

In August last year, police arrested 37 Chinese in the Chatsworth area of Morecambe after concerns were raised about the scale of cockle picking on the sands at the bay.



Police continue searching for survivors in the bay.

at force six and the sea movement was 45 knots.

Roberts said none of the people had any safety gear and some had stripped naked to try and swim to safety through the tides.

Ric Phillips from RAF Kinloss said, "The tide meant the water went fairly rapidly from waist level on these people up to their necks."

Of the 16 survivors, two are

from England, nine are current asylum seekers and five were unknown to the immigration service before the tragedy.

Liu Xiaodong, spokesman for the Chinese Consulate-General in Manchester, released a list of the survivors. "But the list may not be credible since it is based on the claims of the survivors instead of any legal documents that can prove what they say," Liu said.

"We are currently working on identifying the deceased although it will take some time before they are formally identified," Gemma Sykes, assistant press officer of the Lancashire Police, told *Beijing Today*.

"We have received materials and photos from 11 people in the Chinese mainland who suspect their relatives are among the dead and have handed them to the British police," said Liu.



Members of the Chinese Consulate-General in Manchester arrived at the bay on February 7. Xinhua Photo

*China Daily* reported this Tuesday that seven families in Fuding, Fujian Province, say they believe their missing family members are among the 19 dead.

The report says all the men went to Britain in the same way: paying human traffickers, known as snakeheads, between 200,000 and 300,000 yuan, and being forced to travel as stowaways to the UK. The report said they usually borrowed the money at exorbitant interest rates to cover the cost and worked hard abroad to pay back the lenders and earn money for their families.

Guo Binglong, 30, was reported to have called home with a borrowed cell phone shortly before he died. "My son said on the phone: the water has risen to my chest, it's the Englishman's fault. The Englishman is to blame," Guo's mother said in the *China Daily* report.

Guo Yuanzhu, father of 18-year-old Guo Changmao, recalled, "Just 10 days before the accident, he called home telling us he was so happy to have finally got the job of picking shellfish. How could we know this job would take him from us?"

Zhou Xiaomei said her husband Cao Chaokun called her last Thursday saying he had found a job picking cockles. "I asked him if it was risky but he said he would take care of himself," she said.

#### Exploitation

The *Guardian* newspaper reported this week on the life of Ms. Li, a Chinese immigrant who had worked as a cockler in Morecambe Bay. Li is now working in a Chinese restaurant in London.

She arrived in Britain three years ago, with the aim of making some money to support her family back home. After she had overstayed her visa, she became desperate to find work. Four months ago, she heard from a friend that the pay wasn't too bad at Morecambe Bay and that the workers were not subject to constant supervision.

She was taken from London to Lancashire in a minibus organized by one of the cockle gangmasters. Most of the people in the bus were Chinese, the others being from eastern Europe.

Her supervisor was a Chinese man of Fujianese origin. He was only known to her group of workers as "the translator". He appeared to be working for an English gangmaster who would ferry the workers down to the beach and then pick them up after they had finished. Li said the gangmasters tended to be solo operators, rather than part of a bigger network. "They're just out there to make a profit from whoever is vulnerable," she said.

She was one of three Chinese women workers on the sands at that time. The work was mainly done by men as it is physically strenuous, she said. "My male colleagues worked a lot harder than I. I could only manage 40 hours a week. When the tides went down, we went out to work, sometimes at 2 am, or later in the morning, and sometimes in the daytime. Our working time was very irregular, depending only on the tides. We didn't have regular sleeping hours, either.

"Those who were able to carry on working there were more fit and more used to hard labour because they came from the rural areas of Fujian. They know

about hardship. And they know that they can earn a sum of money equivalent to a year's wages in China within just two months."

She was paid 11 pounds sterling per bag of cockles. "I used to pick only four bags a day. Even that small amount took me a long time to collect."

Li said the living conditions for the workers were pretty squalid. "Four of us lived in a basement and two people had to share each bed. The single bunk bed was the only furniture in the basement. Above us, there were more than 11 workers packed in four rooms," she said.

"Our view is that the English bosses are fundamentally responsible, and should pay compensation. But what can we do? We're illegal immigrants," she said after hearing the news of the deaths.

Brian Wong, chairman of the Liverpool Chinese Business Association, described the desperation of the illegal workers that left them open to exploitation by criminal gangs. "Many of these immigrants are heavily in debt to snakehead gangs and must take the first job they can find to clear the money they borrowed to get here."

Steve Wildon, a physiotherapist at a local hospital, told AFP after the incident, "People are being exploited by the promise of western prosperity. But what they think they are coming to get and what they do get are two completely different things," he said. "They can't go to the authorities and say they are being exploited because they will be deported if they are in Britain illegally."

#### Waiting to happen?

Harry Roberts of the RNLI describes the deaths as a "tragically waiting to happen." He says gangs of immigrants often travel to the area to harvest the shellfish, with up to 500 people a day picking cockles.

Geraldine Smith, Member of Parliament for Morecambe and Lunesdale, says, "We need better regulation of public fisheries, with perhaps a licence of 500 pounds before people can go cockle picking. The money raised from these licences could then pay for proper enforcement of safety at the bay."

Thomas Chan, the director of Chinese in Britain Forum and a member of the Home Office race equality advisory panel, called on ministers to introduce a quota system to allow more Chinese people to work in Britain legally. "We have to realize there is a need for these workers but the Government does not talk to the business community," said Chan. "On a work permit scheme they would not need to come here illegally."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has expressed his sorrow at the deaths of the 19 people and promised to consider tougher laws dealing with the abuse of immigrant workers.

Zhang Qiyue, spokeswoman for China's Foreign Ministry, reiterated China's firm policy against illegal immigrants, saying China was willing to work with the British government to fight the multi-national crime of illegal immigration.

Meanwhile, according to the *Guardian*, the authorities face a challenge in finding charges to bring against anyone found responsible for the tragedy. Tax, health and employment law charges are possible, but the paperless contracts of gang work make it hard to pin responsibility on anyone.

By Wei Tingyu

February 5 is supposed to be the Chinese traditional Lantern Festival, a time of family gathering. But in Shanxi Province, China's coal capital, a mining disaster on the border of Lingshi and Fenxi Counties took the lives of 28 men. It's just the latest serious accident in the province, a product of illegal mining practices and the scramble for precious coal resources.

#### Rescue on family day

In the afternoon of February 5, the Lingshi government was informed by a villager from Huizu Village that 28 people from Fenxi County, led by village head Zhen Yuexiu, had not returned since entering an abandoned mine shaft on the previous evening. The villager, whose name has not been disclosed to the media, also mentioned that explosions had been heard. He said the abandoned shaft was connected to that of another coal mine belonging to Chenjiayuan Village across the border in Fenxi county.

The two county governments immediately organized rescue teams which set out at 1:30 pm. Huizu village officials rushed to the mine shaft and found thick steam pouring out. It was 5:30 pm before the poisonous gas had dispersed and rescue teams were able to head underground. Three hours later they found 17 bodies about 300 meters underground.

According to the rescue teams, most of the bodies were facing the ground and some had even

buried their faces deep into the coal earth. It appeared they had died from carbon monoxide poisoning. The bodies were found in an area of 20 square meters and the entry to the nearby tunnels had been blocked by rock debris, which was later confirmed to be the aftermath of a large-scale mine collapse caused by a deliberate explosion.

In the next three days, another 11 bodies were discovered. Among the 28 victims, six were Huizu Villagers and the others were migrant laborers from Sichuan and Shaanxi. According to *Shanxi Daily* on February 8, Jin Jianzhong, the deputy commissioner of Lüliang Administrative Office, was removed from his position as this was the latest in a succession of severe coal mine accidents in the area since last year.

#### Who set off the explosives?

Police have detained Pang Longhu, the owner of an illegal coal mine in Chenjiayuan Village. Pang confessed that he sent four miners to deposit six boxes of explosives at the mouth of the shaft and detonate them at dawn on February 4. One of the men was killed on the spot.

According to police, Pang had been digging locally and coveted an abandoned shaft being mined illegally by Zhen Yuexiu. Pang and Zhen started competing to

mine coal from their connecting mine shaft. According to Huizu villagers, the miners had been warned that this competition could lead to violence and deliberate injury. Once one side was found mining across the border, the other side would blow down the linking tunnels to drive them away. On January 9, Pang's men had forced out a miner from Huizu with a shotgun.

After a preliminary investigation, police decided at least two blasts had occurred underground on the fateful day. Rescuers found two sites where there was evidence of explosions 150 meters apart in the linking tunnels. Duan Jianguo, deputy secretary-general of the provincial government, said that it was still hard to say exactly what happened as the Huizu miners had also been carrying explosives when they set out underground.

#### A dirty job

Shanxi's coal output last year was worth more than 60 billion yuan and amounted to 30 percent of the country's total. However, the riches have been accompanied by many deadly coal mine accidents, often caused by illegal mining. Nevertheless, the local people are still eager to head underground in search of profit.

Reporters from *Shanxi Daily* got two explanations for the il-

legal mining. The first was the huge profits available.

Since last year, energy shortages around the country have driven coal prices up to 300 yuan per ton, sometimes even higher than 400 yuan. Coal seams outside state-run mines are seen as just money lying in the ground. Though more than 20 local officials have been fired due to their inability to stop illegal mines operating, the illegal mining organizers have various means of keeping up their business besides buying off officials. Many of the mines are surrounded by mountains and highly-alert hidden safeguards keep a lookout for government inspection officials.

The second reason was that mining was the only viable way of making a living locally. Shanxi's mountainous areas are not exactly ideal for farming. Coal mining is so popular that migrant workers flock in from neighboring provinces. "The mine owners don't need us. They want migrant workers who ask for less payment," one Huizu villager said. "I will work for these mine owners as I have to support my family."

According to the State Administration for Safe Production Supervision, the number of coal mine accidents fell by 256 last year and the death toll dropped by 293 compared to 2002. However, the work conditions of many small coal mines are still dangerous. The drive for money still overrules danger in the many private mines, where life is worth less than coal.

## Killing for Coal

# New Life in Old Arts

By Philomena Cho

You might not expect the portly, bespectacled old man dabbling color onto a vase at a large wooden table to be a champion of innovation, but Zhang Tonlu's philosophy has always been about pushing the boundaries. In a long, illustrious career, he's become recognized as one of China's grand masters in the art of cloisonné.

## By accident

Although recognized for his drawing talent at a young age in his native Hebei Province, Zhang became interested in cloisonné almost by accident. "I started to learn this art in 1958, the summer after I graduated from middle school, mainly because the cloisonné factory was just next door to where I lived," Zhang recalls.

It wasn't exactly love at first sight. "I didn't know anything about cloisonné then. I learned a bit about it after watching a documentary on TV but I figured that I'd be finishing a vase in a day since it didn't look that difficult. Little did I know that I'd spend the whole of my first summer just learning to lay down filigree [decorative twists of thin strips of metal]," he says. "In those days, there were no machines involved, it was all done by hand. Each craftsman spent his whole life perfecting just one step of the process: base-hammering, filigree soldering, enamel filling, enamel firing, polishing and gilding. No-one could finish a cloisonné piece alone," says Zhang.

Working in a factory taught Zhang about all aspects of the craft. "I was one of the first people who learned the whole process. I mean, I pretty much grew up in the cloisonné factory, so it was all around me from a very young age. It was an eye-opening experience for me to encounter cloisonné so young, I saw that just because someone could draw didn't mean that they were able to bring their designs alive in cloisonné."

## An ancient art

Chinese traditional enamelware, or cloisonné, is at least 500 years old, one of the traditional palace arts perfected by Chinese craftsmen with centuries of royal patronage. The arduous process behind the ornate art means that a single vase can take several months to complete.

First, a copper shell is hammered and stretched into the desired shape. Unlike the work of a coppersmith, the shaping of the article is just the first step in the creation of a cloisonné piece. Second, filigree copper strips 1.5mm wide are soldered to the surface of the copper in a complicated pattern requiring much precision as well as creativity. Next, the enamel is added, running between the filigree.

With base elements of boric acid, saltpeter and alkaline, the different minerals are ground to a fine powder and mixed into small dishes to create the final color. Precision application is required to get the enamel into the tiny filigree channels. Several firings and re-application of enamel are required to fill the complete pattern as the enamel shrinks when fired. Emery is then used to polish the piece, which is then fired again. A piece of hard carbon is used for the final polish to give the surface added luster. The piece is then gilded to prevent rusting, electroplated and polished again before being considered complete.

## Recognition

Zhang's work, which has won China's highest awards

for cloisonné several times, is best known for its inventiveness in expanding ideas about what can be done with the art form. Zhang credits his focus on innovation to the breadth of his education and experience. "I served as Deputy Factory Head for several years so I had to learn about all of the palace arts, not just cloisonné. It was a great chance to broaden my understanding by absorbing the unique perspectives of each art and then bringing those insights back into my own work."

About his secret to success, Zhang says, "It's not being afraid of failure or of what other people will say. The process of learning and absorbing new things requires technical failures along the way to achieve a breakthrough. This fear of failure is normal, but it's no reason to avoid doing something. I look at my past achievements as history, so every day is a new day full of possibility. This way, I can work without all that pressure," he says.

For Zhang, innovation is not simply about using cloisonné to express contemporary motifs. "I look for harmony between the content, technique and shape so that the appeal of the final work has lasting power. If I were to suddenly bring in very contemporary shapes and visual forms into cloisonné, it wouldn't look right. There must be links to cloisonné's long history for continuity balanced with innovation," Zhang explains.

## Shock of the new

In 1987, Zhang invented a method of creating cloisonné using a flat plane and without multiple firings to achieve the glossy, rich colors. "The flat-plane cloisonné was a breakthrough in method and materials," Zhang says. "I tinkered with the method for over four years before I finally achieved the look and color I wanted."

Better suited to the interior design needs of today's commercial and private spaces, this method has become increasingly popular since its launch. "The largest I've ever made measured 4



After 50 years, Zhang's still busy.

Photo by Huang Liang



Lotus flower by Zhang Tonglu

meters by 4 meters. It took me several years to finish," recalls Zhang. In his workshop today, Zhang and his apprentices are busy on a recently-commissioned series of four flat cloisonné panoramas measuring 1.2m by 85 cm each. The series will take at least three months to complete.

His second notable breakthrough in the field was

created in 1972, when Zhang combined several of the palace arts into a single piece entitled *Bao Che Zun*. It was a horse-drawn royal chariot featuring cloisonné along with silver and gold inlay. "The piece caused such uproar," recalls Zhang with a chuckle. "Something like this had never been done before so it was hard for people to accept. Now, of course, it's

become common practice, even in mass-produced goods."

Zhang also introduced a breakthrough in form with his *Bird Vase*, a gracefully shaped vase in the form of a bird, done in cloisonné with precious stone inlay. "Much of what was considered innovative before was really just adding bits and pieces to a classical form. This was fundamentally different because it changed the basic form into something much more organic and free-flowing," says Zhang.

Zhang's innovations found other outlets beyond shape and method. In 1997, Zhang won a competition to aesthetically camouflage a column in a newly-built hotel. The column had been pronounced unlucky, so Zhang created two-halves of an enormous cloisonné vase topped by jade and glass flowers which came together to completely hide the offending shaft.

## No slowing down

Having received both domestic and international recognition of his cloisonné skills after nearly 50 years of honing his craft, Zhang might be expected to take it easy. Not likely.

"One can't just rest on one's laurels. I prefer to keep demanding more from myself and quicken my pace of learning. There is so much innovation everywhere and so much potential for the traditional arts to explore new territories. You know, when people say that I'm multi-talented (quan cai), I don't agree. I'm just a hard worker, focusing on my craft every day while constantly looking for ways to improve," says Zhang.

"Now, I'm interested in the meeting point between the traditional arts and contemporary expression," Zhang says. "I've been exploring ways to bring traditional cloisonné into contemporary interiors," he adds. He was recently commissioned to create interior fixtures for the People's Hall including door knobs and wall-hangings.

Zhang's workshop and office is housed in the newly opened Baigongfang, a government-backed initiative to support and promote the development of the traditional palace arts.

"Covering 4,000 square meters with a total investment of nearly 200 million yuan, Baigongfang houses 102 provincial and national masters who work with over 400 apprentices in 17 workshops in silver/gold inlay, cloisonné, jade and ivory carving, dough and clay figurines, paper cutting and glass," says Chang Xingchao, of the publicity department at Baigongfang. Of more than 60 traditional arts, only 11 still thrive today.

The workshop is part of a larger government initiative to revitalize this industry, with three million yuan earmarked annually as of 2003 to allow master craftsmen to train apprentices. Perhaps Baigongfang's most important role will be to create a market for these crafts. All studios are open daily for visitors, as well as nicely-appointed showrooms for purchase of a number of the items.

Later this year, Zhang will make a trip to Paris to show his recent works at the 100th Anniversary of the International Traditional Crafts Festival. "I just love traveling," says Zhang. "Not only do I get to see a whole new world of aesthetics, but it's a great chance to see new things and exchange ideas with fellow artisans," he enthuses. Wherever he goes, Zhang is sure to continue innovating in cloisonné and taking his art to a higher level.



Fruit plate by Zhang Tonglu  
Photos by Darlene Lee

# Two Branches of One Music

By Guo Yuandan

South Gaoluo, a small village in Laishui County, Hebei Province, rose to international fame thanks to its *yinyuehui* folk music last year. Meanwhile yinyuehui was also defined as one of Hebei Province's ten top protected cultural items, and South Gaoluo became known as the "hometown of ancient folk music."

The honor was enjoyed by all, except for the residents of North Gaoluo, seperated from South Gaoluo by just a wall, who claim they have been undeservedly overlooked. The villagers argue that the yinyuehui of North Gaoluo should also be listed among the protected cultural items. And they also claim that their yinyuehui is more venerable than that of South Gaoluo.

However professor Qi Yi of Hebei University's music department told *Beijing Today*, "The musical styles of South and North Gaoluo are not so different. Though the music in both villages has developed individually for 100 years, they only vary in some trifling ways."

## What is yinyuehui?

Qi said that yinyuehui refers to a kind of folk music in which the instruments, songs and musical styles have the same origin and are quite similar to the Buddhist music practiced at Zhihua Temple in Beijing. This music has its roots in central Hebei Province and the rural areas of Beijing and Tianjin.

The performance style of yinyuehui evolved from *guchui* music in the Han Dynasty. *Bili* (Chinese guanzi) and *hengchui* (bamboo flute) are the main instruments used.

According to a study carried out by Qi, one form of yinyuehui is *wutan*, which refers to the playing and originally referred to the instruments used in Buddhist ceremonies. The other form is *wentan*, which refers to the vocal part. Qi says since the vocal part is retained in the South Gaoluo yinyuehui, it is more precious.

The performance of yinyuehui has two styles: seated and walking performances. In the seated style, the wind and *yun luo* players sit either side of a long table and the percussion players sit at the end of the table. In the walking style, the orchestra is divided into columns of three, consisting of the banner carriers, *yun luo* and

the percussion.

Every year during early winter, the slack season, there are rehearsals and new students are taken on. All the students must take a test of reading and singing the score, called *gongche*. Only the keynotes are written down, so there is much room for improvisation.

Yinyuehui is regarded not only as form of music, but also a public welfare organization in villages. Its activities are closely connected with traditional Chinese local folk custom. Yinyuehui often accompanies activities such as prayer for good fortune at Spring Festival and folk funerals.

## Two groups one family

In order to show that the yinyuehui of North Gaoluo is the most ancient and original, North Gaoluo villagers checked historical records and asked the monks in nearby temple for advice.

Meanwhile researchers have found that South and North Gaoluo were originally one village. In 1900, the village was divided as a result of religious conflict, hence the two branches of yinyuehui.

The villagers in North Gaoluo maintain that a man called Yan Luhua created yinyuehui, and musical directors are often referred to as "Yan people." Seventy-four year-old Yan Fucai is North Gaoluo yinyuehui musical director. He told *Beijing Today* Monday that yinyuehui originates from the Buddhism of the local temple, Fuyan Temple.

"The music was only allowed to be taught by the monk. Afterwards Yan ancestors begged the monk to teach the skill. I am the 20th generation," Yan said, adding that he is the oldest musician in both North and South Gaoluo. "I believe that my musicians could play more original music. Six members are over 70 and the eldest member is 78. Others are mostly over 50."

The people of South Gaoluo, however, argue that since North Gaoluo has not taken part in the Houshan Granny Temple fair since liberation, it is undeserving of its reputation.

The 15th day of the third lunar month is the Houshan Granny Temple fair in Yi County, the biggest festival for yinyuehui. During the temple fair, yinyuehui of South Gaoluo was performed at the Houshan Temple and there was a regular



Villagers from North Gaoluo perform yinyuehui.

Photo by Zhang Chenggang

place for performance nearby the temple.

However, Qi Yi says South and North Gaoluo musicians could cooperate well in the past for Spring Festival, which shows that the two groups are one family.

## British scholar entranced

When Zhong Sidi, professor of London University, came to China

for the first time in 1986, his friends brought him to hear the temple music. After that, he went to many villages to investigate the traditional folk music. Liu Fu, vice president of Laishui County Cultural Department, recalled, "I brought Zhong and others to many areas in Baoding district. Zhong took a fancy to yinyuehui in South Gaoluo village, which

has a long history, plain style and high cultural value."

Zhong studied yinyuehui in Hebei Province for several years from 1993. South Gaoluo became a regular spot for Zhong to visit and he became friends with many yinyuehui musicians.

On April 3 last year, experts and scholars came from 21 countries in Asia and Europe,

along with officials from the Cultural Department and the Music Research School of China, came to South Gaoluo Village. Since then, the village's yinyuehui has enjoyed worldwide fame.

In fact, Zhong Sidi first visited North Gaoluo. But at that time, the villagers did not trust him, and refused to tell the history of their yinyuehui.

# Yuanmingyuan Restoration



Painting of Jiuzhouqing Yan in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Photo by Zhang Ke

By Zhang Ran

The Beijing government has listed the renovation of Yuanmingyuan's Jiuzhouqing Yan, as one of the 56 key projects for this year.

Jiuzhouqing Yan is one of the main areas of Yuanmingyuan, the old Summer Place, covering 700,000 square meters. It features hills, waterways and 16 ancient bridges.

The renovation, which includes the rebuilding of 3 kilometers of canal and the fortification of the banks, is being carried out by the Beijing Department of

Cultural Relics.

A comprehensive survey of the area and feasibility study was completed by the Yuanmingyuan archaeological department last year. Among the bridges listed for reconstruction, Bilan Bridge is the only one bearing Qing Dynasty Emperor Qianlong's calligraphy.

The southwest section of Yuanmingyuan is the experimental site for the whole renovation project, which was launched in September, 2003, according to Zong Tianliang, director of management section of the garden.

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# Exuberant Kitsch



Welcome the World's Famous Brands No. 9, lacquer on wood, 185 x 40 cm, 2003

By Darlene Lee

The Courtyard Gallery is the site of the China solo debut for the Luo Brothers in a show that will run until February 20. US-native curator Meg Maggio, a 20-year veteran of the contemporary Chinese arts scene, deliberately scheduled the show to coincide with Spring Festival as the exuberant colors, mood and theme of the works echo the festive feel of the holiday season.

Luo Weidong, 40, Luo Weiguo, 39, and little brother Luo Weibing, 36, make up the Luo Brothers trio. Hailing from Guangxi, the Luos use traditional and consumer-culture motifs in an apolitical way to break away from the Political Pop movement. As with many contemporary Chinese artists associated with the Gaudy Art movement, the Luo Brothers' works are characterized by technical mastery over the material.

The Courtyard show combines their lacquer-series entitled *Welcome the World's Famous Brand* along with their paper and ink wash series *Study Hard Every Day Making Progress* in a format facilitating interesting juxtaposition and comparison.

## Motivations

Unlike the works of the Political Pop movement, which preceded Gaudy Art, the Luo Brothers' works are "100 percent apolitical," says Maggio. Their lacquer works feature deeply saturated red hues and cherubic Chinese babies, traditionally garbed, amidst a riotous glut of consumer products with a rich mix of traditional and Cultural Revolution icons thrown in for good measure. "I love my country, so our work isn't criticizing China, it's just reflecting on some issues that bear further consideration," says eldest brother Luo Weidong.

The positive mood of the works seems to reflect a general satisfaction with life. "They're genuinely happy people," adds Maggio. "They think life has been good to them, that they've been the beneficiaries of what's happened so their work is a kind of celebration."

Luo concurs, "I know that I'm lucky that I can both do what I want to do while earning enough to support myself." After living together for years, the brothers now reside



Welcome the World's Famous Brands, lacquer on wood, 240 x 120 cm, 2000



Study Hard Every Day Making Progress No.4, ink on paper, 120 x 100 cm, 2003

in two adjoining houses in Tongxian District, since second brother Luo Weiguo recently married. Big brother Luo quips, "We were too poor to get married before."

## The lacquer series

A carnivalesque fantasy characterizes the *Welcome to World Brand* series, which first premiered in 1993. "Although there is a subtle element of criticism of American hegemony and the wholesale consumption of everything from brand names to fast food, I'm not an extremist," says Luo. "I mean I like eating at McDonald's too. It's more a call for moderation and a reminder that since life is short, trying a bit of everything is a great idea without getting too caught up in it."

Regarding the uniform happiness of the babies in this series, Luo explains, "It's like when we eat too much fast food, we know it's bad for us, a kind of poison,

but we're still smiling when we eat it. That's the kind of dichotomy expressed in these works."

The Luo Brothers mastered the craft of lacquer work early on when Luo Weidong came to Beijing in 1990 to spend three years at the National Lacquer Research Institute. "I learned a lot but it was just too traditional. We wanted to take this method into a more contemporary expression," he says.

## The paper series

Maggio decided to combine the two series for the Luo Brothers' China debut noting, "One of our jobs is to help people understand who the artists are and what they're doing. The work on paper is essential to understanding the Luo Brothers, so we decided to show them together with the lacquer works."

The *Study Hard Every Day Making Progress* series balances

the show with a more subdued color palette. The soft, impressionistic images of children at play in simple surroundings are collaged with slogans that anyone having studied in China will recognize. "The universal appeal of the works on paper is very sentimental, nostalgic and positive," says Maggio. "They're appealing to anyone who went to school in China."

As for the departure from lacquer, Luo explains, "When they said one couldn't do contemporary art on paper, we decided to go back to our drawing and painting roots and do a series on paper." The resulting works in *Study Hard Every Day Making Progress* employ cool bluish-purple colors to create subtle moods of decay and insubstantiality.

## Early influences

Despite registering his three sons as being of the Yao minority, the Luo's father is a Han Chinese who met their Yao mother while fighting for the Liberation Army. Luo Weidong recalls, "I came of school age during the Cultural Revolution so I didn't really go to school. I grew up in the mountains. Originally, I studied sports, but the teacher left so I switched to art."

He then did a brief stint in the army in 1979, including a tour in Vietnam. Luo recalls, "I felt very fortunate to come back alive. I went to art school as soon as I got back."

It has not always been easy sailing for the artistic trio. The elder Luo brother says, "For a long time after we dedicated ourselves to art, I've felt on the outside of important circles, like I couldn't get in. So I just kept working. Looking back, I see the various hardships I've endured as a treasure. Not only do they give me this slight edge in having experienced just a

little bit more than the next person, it's kept us brothers very close and we really support each other."

Before arriving in Beijing, the two elder brothers went into the wood exporting business. Though they did quite well, their hearts were not in it. Luo Weidong notes, "Our interests didn't match the requirements of doing business. We don't smoke, we don't drink, we just like a simple life. So we decided to go back to art."

That early commercial success did, however, bring them into contact with the big international brands that feature so heavily in their work. "We both had mobile phones back in those early days so we got very sensitive to brands. We even bought Coca-Cola stock back then," says Luo Weidong, whose early experience designing ads and commercial graphics also brought a different sensitivity and directness of communication to their art practice.

"Early on, people accused us of making ads," he adds, "but we think ads are a kind of art, too."

## Optimism and activism

"The development of the domestic market is not just my headache, it requires the active participation of the artists. It's just amazing that this is the first time the Luo Brothers have had a dedicated show in China considering how well-known they are internationally," notes Maggio.

As for the growing visibility of Chinese contemporary artists on the international art circuit, Luo takes a measured view. "Nowadays, it's impossible not to include Chinese artists because there are just so many of us," he says with a smile. "What's sad is that China still hasn't found its own voice in art. Maybe we'll have to wait for the next generation to generate this coherent impact."

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# Time-Delay Grammys Draw Higher Ratings



Beyonce and Prince (above)  
Yoko Ono (left)  
Justin Timberlake (below)

AFP Photos



The tame and tape-delayed CBS broadcast of the Grammys was short on scandal but long on ratings, drawing the music awards' biggest TV audience in three years, viewership figures showed on Monday.

The 3 1/2-hour telecast dominated the first Sunday of the February ratings "sweep" with nearly 26.4 million viewers tuning in to see R 'n' B star Beyonce Knowles nab five Grammys and hip-hop duo OutKast win the coveted prize for album of the year.

Sunday night's presentation of the 46th annual Grammy Awards was broadcast on a five-minute delay instituted by CBS in reaction to Janet Jackson's breast flash at the hands of dance partner Justin Timberlake a week earlier during the CBS Super Bowl telecast. CBS and Jackson offered conflicting reports about why she was not at the show.

CBS need not have worried – the already staid Grammys were even more conservative than usual. Curses or cleavage were in short supply, with the exception of Christina Aguilera's dangerously low-cut pink dress.

Beyonce turned out to be the queen of the ball, tying a record for female artists with her five awards. But she won none of the top categories of song, record or album of the year.

After a tribute by artists including Sting, the Beatles were given the President's Award in recognition of their appearance 40 years ago on the Ed Sullivan television variety show, the moment Beatlemania hit America.

Beatles widows Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison accepted the special Grammy award. A tearful Ono, 70, said if Lennon were still alive he would: "Say it again, 'come together, give peace a chance and love is all we need,'" she said echoing the words from three of the Liverpoolian pacifist's most famous songs.

(Edited by Chen Ying)

## WORLDWIDE



Clint Eastwood, Peter Jackson, Sofia Coppola, Fernando Meirelles and Peter Weir (L-R)

### Oscar Lunch Brings Hollywood Stars Together

Charlize Theron wore white and looked more like a goddess than a monster. Ben Kingsley was next to her in a black suit while nearby Clint Eastwood stood in the shadow of a giant Oscar statue. The scene was the group photograph at the annual gathering of Oscar nominees for a pre-Academy Awards lunch at the Beverly Hills Hilton where the emphasis was on accomplishment and not on victory, as a who's who of Hollywood showed up to chat, rub shoulders, network and reminisce.

Joe Roth, the veteran filmmaker producing his first Academy Awards telecast, admitted to a certain nervousness about the February 29 show to be hosted by Billy Crystal, a show he promised would be "funny and quick" and have a surprise at the end when the cameras goes back stage to catch all the winners at once.



Diana Ross

### Diana Ross Sentenced to Two Days Jail

Motown star Diana Ross pleaded no contest on Monday to driving under the influence of alcohol and was ordered by a Tucson, Arizona judge to spend two days in jail, her lawyer said.

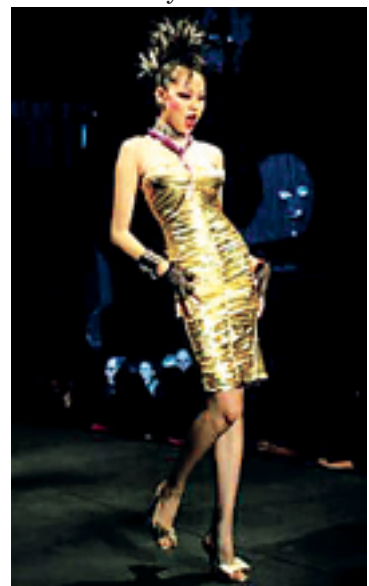
Under an arrangement with the court, the 59-year-old singer entered the plea by telephone from New York and will likely serve her time at a jail near her home in Los Angeles County, attorney Stephen Paul Barnard said.

"I think she is very pleased to have this behind her," Barnard said. "She was willing to accept a plea along these lines a long time ago."

The 59-year-old performer was stopped early in the morning of December 30, 2002, by Tucson police who were responding to a call about a motorist driving the wrong way through traffic.

### NY Fashion Seen in Most Colorful Mood Since 9/11

The cornucopia of rich color on runways in New York's fashion week shows Americans once again appreciating the good things in life after the dark days of the September 11 attacks, fashion experts said on Monday.



A model for designer Betsey Johnson

"This is the first season we've seen a lot of color for fall, a lot more color than we've seen in a long, long time," said Ben Gomes of OPR, a fashion and trend information firm.

The colors flashing down the catwalks are rich basics of brown and blue along with strong crimson and shocking pink in unexpected combinations, said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute.

### 'Vagina Monologues' Silenced Before Shanghai Debut

The curtain has fallen on Eve Ensler's controversial but internationally acclaimed women's rights play, "The Vagina Monologues," in China's most cosmopolitan city before it had even begun.

Despite reports that the play had been killed by a jittery government, Shanghai city officials insisted Tuesday there were unrelated problems.

The play had been due to open in Shanghai Tuesday and run for a month, marking its first performance in Chinese to the general public. The city's Cultural Bureau declined comment.

The play is going ahead in the conservative capital, Beijing, with a scheduled opening on Friday.

Reuters  
Edited by Guo Yuandan

## Tell it Like it is

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Cui Yongyuan, host of the popular talk show program *Tell it Like it is*, is annoyed by the hit movie *Cell Phone*, and doesn't mind saying so.

In an interview with *Beijing Youth Weekly* last week, Cui made public his quarrel with Feng Xiaogang, the director of the movie.

According to Cui, *Cell Phone* has not only caused an unnecessary crisis of trust between many couples but also had a considerable negative influence onto him.

He maintains that the public takes him as the original model for Yan Shouyi, the central figure in the movie, who is also the host of a popular talk show program and is involved in an extra-marital affair. The talk show in the movie, Cui

says, seems to be a direct copy of *Tell it Like it is*, with only the names changed.

Feng Xiaogang in fact visited Cui before shooting the movie to do some background research.

"I really can't understand why such a movie is allowed to be screened all over China, and everyone can go and see it," Cui was quoted as saying in *Beijing Youth Weekly*.

"I really question Feng's intention in making this movie, for I don't think it in any sense 'reveals' the actuality of the life of we talk show hosts. We don't lead lives as those depicted in *Cell Phone*. At least, the people around me are not so shameless as Yan Shouyi."

For his part, Feng has not commented on Cui's outburst. When pressed for a response by media, he said only that he "supported free speech."

## Warner Music Guru Joins Taihe

By Guo Yuandan

Vice president and chief music supervisor of Warner Music China Song Ke is leaving Warner to join Taihe Media.

At the same time, performers signed to Song's Maitian label, including Pu Shu, Lao Lang, Ye Pei and the band Dada, will join the new company together with Song Ke, but will maintain their cooperative relationship with Warner.

Song Ke was among the first of the popular "campus singers" when still a student at Tsinghua University. He set up Maitian Music after returning from studying in the US in the 1990s. In 2000, he joined Warner China, where he achieved considerable success building the brand and managing performers. Warner Music is now the largest record company in China's mainland.

According to Song, his move is simply a personal decision, "My departure is only to look for a wider

developing space. I hope to set up a large record company which belongs to Chinese themselves and realize more dreams in this field," he told *Beijing Youth Daily* on February 2.

Taihe is a large real estate company, and its subordinate Taihe Media mainly deals in the entertainment industry.

The new venture with Song Ke will be Taihe Media's first foray into the recording industry, and follows its investing in Huayi Brotherhood Film Company, Paige-Taihe Television Production Company and Taihe Film Company.

Vice president of Taihe Media Yu Tianhong, said Taihe's entry into the music market was prompted by the fact that the market had been seriously underestimated, according to the report in *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Taihe will invest 20 million yuan in the new record company and Song will take the role of director and general manager.

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By Brown Zhang

International Olympic Committee Vice President Kim Un-yong of South Korea was arrested on January 27 while in the hospital for bribery, embezzlement and other charges, according to a report put out on the official website of the Chinese Olympic Committee the following day.

South Korean prosecutors have alleged that Kim, 72, embezzled money from two domestic tae kwon do governing organizations he once headed. Tae kwon do is a modern martial art developed in Korea.

Accusations against Kim first surfaced on January 14 in a report issued by the Yonhap News Agency, South Korea's largest news service. That report quoted unnamed sources as saying that Kim stood accused of embezzling four billion Korean won (\$3.34 million) from the World Tae Kwon Do Federation and the Seoul-based World Tae Kwon Do Headquarters, which issues international tae kwon do credentials.

Kim also faces allegations that he received money in return for helping two businessmen become members of the Korean Olympic Committee, the Associated Press reported on January 25.

While head of the Korean Olympic Committee, he may also have taken thousands of dollars of athletic equipment from a sporting goods company during the process of selecting an official committee sponsor. That company ended up winning a four-year sponsorship contract.

#### A controversial figure

In his native South Korea, Kim has long been a respected figure as a speaker of five languages, a former internationally highly-ranked tae kwon do master and national sports leader. He served as president of the World Tae Kwon Do Federation from its founding in 1973 to 2000, led the successful campaign to make tae kwon do an official medal sport in the Olympics and had a big role in bringing the 1988 Summer Games to Seoul.

In recent years, however, he has become the target of rising criticism and condemnation in South Korea.

At a July 2, 2003, meeting of the IOC in Prague, Czech Republic, the South Korean city Pyongchang failed to win the bidding to host the 2010 Winter Olympics. Shortly afterwards, Kim was widely accused in his native country of sacrificing the city's bid in order to secure his own re-election as IOC vice president. South Korea's National Assembly even passed a resolution urging Kim to resign his seat on the legislative body.

He managed to survive those accusations, but an anonymous letter sent to Seoul District Prosecutor's Office in early January this year put him in hot water again. According to that letter, both the World Tae Kwon Do Federation and Korea Tae Kwon Do Association are in precarious financial positions because of illegal dealings and embezzlement.

The South Korean police quickly launched investigations into the charges and discovered a domestic bank account containing \$1.5 million in foreign currency controlled by Kim and his wife.

Things for Kim took a turn for the worse on January 18, when former IOC member Lee Kuang-tie was arrested by the Korean police on bribery charges.

According to a report in *China Sports Weekly* on January 8, in an attempt to secure a spot as an elected member of the Korean Olympic Committee in November 2001, Lee gave then-committee

# IOC Vice President Arrested on Corruption Charges



This is not the first time Kim Un-yong has come under fire since joining the IOC.

Photos by Photocom

president Kim \$110,000.

Kim has been in the hospital since mid-January to receive treatment for dizziness and hypertension. A Reuters' report on January 29 revealed that Kim had resigned on January 9 from key posts in the government, including his seat in the South Korean National Assembly.

As Kim has been an active participant in sports exchanges between South Korea and the world since taking position in the IOC, his arrest is certain to greatly weaken the country's image in the international sporting field, said an article in the *Korean Daily* newspaper on January 29.

#### The IOC's reaction

According to the official website of the Chinese Olympic Committee, a spokesman from the IOC revealed at a news conference held January 11 that committee President Jacques Rogge

had demanded the IOC's ethics commission investigate Kim's case.

An IOC statement issued after that news conference said the executive board had decided unanimously to deprive Kim of "all the rights, prerogatives and functions derived from his IOC membership" until the investigation and a report from its own ethics commission had been completed.

Xinhua Net reported on January 31 that Rogge explained the purpose of the suspension was to maintain the IOC's reputation and the decision was made by consensus from all 14 members of the IOC's executive board. If Kim is proven innocent, his rights in the IOC would be immediately reinstated, the president added. However, if the ethics commission's investigation confirms Kim's misconduct, he could be permanently kicked out by the IOC if

two-thirds of the committee's members agree to do so.

Kim became an IOC member in 1986 and was elected vice president on April 1992. He finished second to Rogge in an IOC leadership election three years ago, and now stands as the highest-ranked official ever suspended from the powerful international sports organization.

This is not the first time Kim has come under fire or scrutiny within the IOC. In 1999, he was the subject of a severe warning in the wake of the bribery scandal surrounding Salt Lake City's successful bid for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. Ten other IOC members resigned as a result of that debacle.

An IOC panel also said Kim used his influence to help get his son John Kim a job funded by the Salt Lake City committee, according to a CNN report of January 27.

## China Soccer Squad to Face Kuwait

By Jill Ji

The national football teams of China and Kuwait will meet in the first preliminary match for the 2006 FIFA World Cup for either side next Wednesday, February 18. The game will be played at Tianhe Stadium in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, with kick-off scheduled for 7:30 pm.

A representative of the Guangzhou Football Association, organizer of the event, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the Chinese national team would arrive in Guangzhou from their training base in Sanshui, Guangdong on Sunday morning. The Kuwaiti team will come in after practicing in Hong Kong. Roman Ditiy, 45, of Uzbekistan will be the main referee for the match.

The Kuwait team will include top players Jarrah al-Atiki, Bashar Abdullah Jubilates and Bader al-Motawaa. Hao Haidong, Li Tie and Zhang Yuning will be leading the Chinese side, and defender Li Weifeng has been included on the team's roster for the game despite having sustained a slight injury during a friendly match between Finland and China played last Saturday in Shenzhen.

## Yao Edges Shaq for NBA All-Star Slot

By Wesley Lei

This Sunday, February 15, will mark the running of the 53rd NBA All-Star Game at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, US. The event will consist of the showcase match of Eastern Conference stars against their Western Conference counterparts, as well as standard side shows such as the rookie challenge, 3-point shoot out and slam-dunk competition.

The lead-up to the annual event has not been without its surprises. Basketball fans voted Chinese star Yao Ming starting center for the Western Conference team over Shaquille O'Neal, perhaps the most recognizable player in the league, for the second straight year.

The undeniable popularity of 2.26-meter-tall Yao has been proven in All-Star balloting over the last two years, relegating O'Neal to reserve status in the league's mid-season showcase. This year, Yao registered a come-from-behind win, as when the NBA announced the third returns earlier this month, Yao was trailing O'Neal by roughly 30,000 votes.

The leading overall vote-getter was Toronto Raptors swingman Vince Carter, who received 2,127,183 votes and will start at forward for the Eastern Conference. Indiana's Rick Carlisle will coach the Eastern Conference All-Stars, while Flip Saunders of the Minnesota Timberwolves will lead the West.

LeBron James will head the roster of first-year players announced Tuesday for the rookie challenge. In the event, that team will face the league's top second-year players, including 2002-03 Rookie of the Year Amare Stoudemire and Yao, who as a starter in the All-Star match may not take the floor in the game.

## Brazil Likely to Win 2014 World Cup

By Wesley Lei

In a statement made on Saturday, FIFA president Sepp Blatter virtually handed the 2014 World Cup finals to Brazil.

"I know you have practically taken a decision as to where (the finals) are going, possibly the country that will celebrate its centenary in 2014," Blatter said at a meeting of the South American Football Confederation (CSF) congress at its headquarters in the Paraguayan capital Asuncion. "So if that's the case, it will be Brazil. It's the only country of the 10 (CSF members) whose federation will be 100 years old in 2014," he continued.

FIFA actively works to rotate the lucrative privilege of hosting the World Cup finals around the world. Asia got the last cup, held in Japan and South Korea in 2002, Germany is set to be host in 2006, several African nations are the only bidders for the 2010 tournament, and the 2014 event is expected to go to South America.

The last time the finals were held in the Americas was the 1994 Cup in the US, at which Brazil won their fourth world title. Another win in 2002 gave Brazil a fifth, bringing the total number of finals won by South American countries to nine. Argentina and Uruguay have each won twice.

By Zhang Bo

January 31 was a big day for Chinese Formula One fans, as the prices of tickets to the Grand Prix of China, the first F1 race to be held in this country, were announced at a press conference in Shanghai. Shanghai International Circuit Co., organizer and host of the race, issued the prices and announced that 150,000 tickets would be available for reservation starting early March.

The Grand Prix of China will be held at the Shanghai International Circuit, located in a northwestern suburb of the city, from September 24 to 26. The race will be one of the three fly-away competitions, meaning events in which the entire F1 grid is moved outside of continental Europe, during the 2004 Formula One World Championship.

Tickets have been divided into nine price levels, ranging from 370 yuan for standing room only tickets to 3,700 yuan for top seats for all three days. The price for a one-day ticket has been set at 160 yuan (roughly \$20).

According to the organizer, tickets for

## Shanghai Grand Prix Prices Fixed



An artist's conception of an operating Shanghai International Circuit

only 150,000 of the venue's total 200,000 seats will be sold in consideration of potential safety and traffic problems.

Tickets will be available for reservation over the Internet and through authorized ticketing agents in Shanghai and around the world.

"Tickets for the Shanghai Grand Prix will be cheaper than those for the other F1 events around the world," said Mao Xiaohan, general manager of

Shanghai International Circuit Co.

By comparison, three-day tickets for the Malaysian Grand Prix in Kuala Lumpur in March range from \$50 to \$467, with one-day tickets set at \$27.

Mao said that his company carefully researched pricing policies in order to make sure tickets were affordable and reasonable. "We have analyzed the prices of each F1 event on the 2004 tour and learned about different price-setting mechanisms. Meanwhile, we have hired some major international market research firms to study the markets of Shanghai and other domestic cities, and checked the prices of the Japan-Korea World Cup 2002 and domestic NBA games," he explained.

Formula One racing is one of the world's top sports leagues and the fastest, highest-tech auto racing circuit, according to Yu Zhifei, Shanghai International Circuit Co. vice general manager. An av-

erage of 200,000 spectators attend each race, and events are broadcast in over 200 countries and regions around the world, giving it similar status to the Olympics or the World Cup in terms of international prominence.

"During the three days of the Shanghai Grand Prix, spectators will be able to enjoy many aspects of Formula One outside the race itself. We set the prices of our tickets to appeal to many kinds of people so that they can all enjoy the event," said Yu.

The Shanghai International Circuit is a new course, completed in the spring of 2002. Last fall, Federation of International Automobile President Max Moseley visited the track and agreed to give it a place on the F1 schedule from 2004 to 2010.

The venue covers a total area of 5.3 square kilometers. The track itself, designed by a German firm, measures 5.4 kilometers in length and occupies an area of 2.5 square kilometers. The rest of the space at the Shanghai International Circuit has gone to grandstands and commercial areas.

By Joel Kirkhart

After years of noticeable absence from Beijing's dining scene, Vietnamese food became a true dining craze in the capital in the past couple years. Yet the fad seems to have waned in more recent months, with no new restaurants opening and some closing their doors for good.

Choices for dining out Vietnam-style rather neatly fall into two categories – the stylish and up-market and the semi-stylish, mid-market.

The opening of **Nuage** on the banks of Houhai near Yindingqiao not only marked the start of the Vietnamese vogue, it arguably sparked the up-market wave that has swept the whole lake area. Style rules at Nuage, with heavy use of wood and wicker establishing an elegant feel while the bathroom is replete with its own waterfall. The dining area has been greatly expanded since the opening, speaking to both the strength of the food (though portions can be small) and the restaurant's standing as a place to see and be seen.

The demise of Sanlitun's Citronelle has left **Nam Nam**, which stands north of the bar street next to the old Friendship Store, as Nuage's main rival in the upscale Vietnamese scene. The main two-storey room at Nam Nam is very attractive, bright and open with a distinct Vietnamese-colonial air. At last check, admittedly quite a while ago, some dishes were good and others middling, with prices rather high for smallish portions.

Two later comers to the Vietnam food fight were mid-range choices **Muse** and **De-Con**. *Beijing Today* reviewed Muse shortly after it opened last spring and gave it good marks for authenticity and reasonable prices. A more recent trip, however, was less encouraging and indicated that standards may be slipping. They still do decent spring rolls and authentic filter coffee.

Though the food at CBD-central De-con is not exclusively Vietnamese – the menu covers cooking from all over Southeast Asia – what the kitchen does, it does pretty well. The menu even includes (as yet untested) Vietnamese-style sandwiches. The decor is decent if not memorable and waitresses don funky Japanese-style leg warmers.

#### De-con Asian Café and Restaurant

**Where:** Second Floor, e-Tower, 12 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang  
**Tel:** 6586 7730  
**Open:** 9 am – 11 pm

#### Muse Parisian Vietnamese Restaurant

**Where:** 1 Nongzhan Nanlu, Chaoyang Park west gate, Chaoyang  
**Tel:** 6586 3188  
**Open:** 11 am – 10 pm

#### Nam Nam

**Where:** 7 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang  
**Tel:** 8468 6053  
**Open:** 10:30 am – 10:30 pm

#### Nuage

**Where:** 22 Qianhai East Bank, Xicheng  
**Tel:** 6401 9581  
**Open:** 12-2 pm, 6-10 pm

# Vibrant Vietnamese

Where to go to feast on the foods of Vietnam in the capital



The sandwiches that off this impromptu assembly line at the Nhu Lan restaurant in Saigon are staggeringly tasty and, unfortunately, beyond compare with any local equivalent.

## Tastes of Vietnam

(The second article in a two-part series)

By Joel Kirkhart

Rice may reign supreme in Vietnamese cuisine, but fish and seafood are not far behind in significance or abundance. The country's narrow borders and extensive shoreline mean that fresh fish, shrimp, clams, crabs and lobsters are readily available nationwide, from coastal cities like Saigon to more internal areas such as Hanoi. During our trip to the country over Spring Festival, my girlfriend and I were delighted to find such delicacies tremendously fresh, tasty and reasonably priced everywhere we went.



Chao tom is available at most of Beijing's Vietnamese restaurants.

Shrimp are a common ingredient in Vietnamese cooking and subjected to all kinds of culinary treatments – barbecued, pickled, stir-fried, steamed and even mashed into paste and wrapped around lengths of fresh sugar cane then grilled in a delicious dish called *chao tom*.



Hanoi specialty cha ca is cooked in a skillet over a pot of burning embers.

Among the many great fish dishes found around the country is the humble Hanoi specialty *cha ca*, fried fish with greens and noodles. We got our first taste of this delicacy at groovy restaurant-bar La Brique in Hanoi's Old Quarter.

The fish came out of the kitchen on a pan, cooked nearly through in a mixture of ginger and turmeric, giving it a rich golden color and strong fragrance. The pan was then put atop a clay jar filled with glowing coals, over which cooking was completed. As a last step, our waitress added a handful of fresh dill greens, which quickly wilted, and some roast peanuts.

To eat, we spooned some springy rice noodles into our bowls, added leaves of fresh mint and basil, then put in a scoop of the fish and dill mixture, topped it all off with a splash of fish sauce and mixed.

We discovered a superior version of the dish at a Saigon specialist named Cha Ca Ha Noi. The menu there consisted of only three items, including a version of the Hanoi favorite that was relatively pricey, but more than worth it.

What made the dish really stand out was the shrimp paste sauce, into which the restaurant's friendly owner added a pinch of culinary magic. From a pocket, he produced a vial of a liquid called *ca cuong* that is somehow drawn from tiny glands located behind the wings of male beetles that live in rice fields. Just one drop was enough to transform the rank fermented shrimp paste into a perfumed, complex concoction that continued to evolve as we ate.

Cha Ca Ha Noi also served up a plate of wonderful stuffed steamed snails, or *oc nhoi thit*. For the dish, the snail meat is plucked out, minced and combined with ground pork, shallots and ginger, then put back into the shells and steamed until done. A simple tug on cleverly tucked ribbons of bamboo leaf was all it took to remove the tasty nuggets, ready for dunking in sweetened fish sauce.

As much as we enjoyed such interesting, exotic fare,

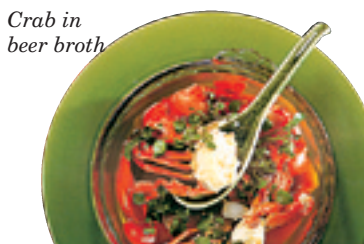
the dish that left the greatest impression was, surprisingly, a sandwich.

Since their introduction by the French, baguettes have been eagerly adopted by the Vietnamese and the country has earned a reputation for baking the best such bread in Asia. On their own, these fragrant, crusty yet airy loaves are magnificent (and cost a mere 8 mao each on the street), but as sandwich bases, they enter the realm of the mythical.



The greatest sandwich in the world?

Perhaps the best place in the country to try these heavenly hoagies is a bustling, bare-bones store and eatery in Saigon called Nhu Lan, where they have sandwiches down to a science. First, crisp, fresh baguettes are surgically cut by a cleverly-designed machine that makes a precise, deep slice without crushing the crust. The filling is very complex, beginning with a dab of molasses-y soy sauce, a little butter and a thick spread of Vietnamese pate made from pork liver. Next come slices of different cold cuts, along with sprigs of cilantro, slices of onion, a healthy handful of crisp pickled radish salad and piquant chili slices. The meats look a bit sketchy, but that is easy to ignore, as the final combination is an incomparable explosion of flavor and texture almost worth the expense of a



Crab in beer broth

## Strange Brew

By Sarah Bai

Among the Western items that caught on in Vietnam during their many years of foreign occupation was coffee. Credit should probably go the French for introducing the beans and the habit of their consumption, but the Vietnamese have developed a way of drinking coffee they can call all their own.



Strong coffee brewed into evaporated milk makes for a sweet, highly caffeinated treat that is excellent iced.

Today, Vietnam produces massive amounts of coffee beans, which are generally roasted very dark and make for a potent, aromatic brew with a distinct spicy flavor that hints of cinnamon and chocolate. Those qualities are especially evident when the coffee is made with a typical Vietnamese filter, an efficient individual device normally cast from aluminum or stainless steel.

All of the Vietnamese restaurants in Beijing offer this kind of coffee, but it is quite easy to make at home with such a filter (many of which are actually made in southern China, meaning they are theoretically available in this country). First, lift the removable inner press and scoop in three teaspoons of ground coffee. Then put the press back in and position the filter over a smallish cup. Pour in water to near the top, adding more as desired.

Many Vietnamese like their coffee sweet and milky, and achieve that effect by pouring a measure of evaporated milk into their glasses before brewing. That mixture results in a drink of candy-like sweetness with a heady coffee kick and is particularly delicious in ice coffee form.

roundtrip ticket to Saigon alone. And all for the equivalent of 3 yuan.

#### Recipe: Crab in Beer Broth – Cua hap bia

Beer has caught on around Vietnam, and domestic brews such as 555, Saigon and Hanoi brands, are pretty good. Here, beer used as a base for steaming fresh hard-shell crabs becomes a delicious broth.

#### Ingredients:

4 whole large crabs (about 1 1/2 kg), scrubbed, cleaned and cut in half  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
1 tablespoon oyster sauce  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1 large onion, cut into wedges

1 large tomato, cut into wedges  
1 red chili, sliced  
3/4 cup (180 ml) beer  
1 cup (60 g) watercress

#### Procedure:

Heat oil in a wide pan. Add crabs, salt, pepper, sesame oil, oyster sauce and garlic and fry over high heat for five minutes. Add onion, tomato and chili and quickly stir-fry, then add beer. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, or until crabs are cooked.

## Dining Out

### Valentine's Day Special

By James Liu

#### Cuisine Galley, Xinqiao Novotel Hotel

Enjoy the Valentine's set menu, a five-course French dinner priced at 528 yuan per couple including a glass of red wine or local champagne. The meal will be accompanied by live violin and all lovely ladies will receive a complimentary Valentine's chocolate and rose. **Where:** 2 Dongjiaomin Xiang, Chongwen **Open:** 6-10 pm **Tel:** 6513 3366 ext. 2206



#### Be Mine at the Swissecafé

The special Valentine's package at the Swissotel's Swissecafé includes a buffet dinner, a glass of sparkling wine, roses for all ladies, live piano, digital photo shoots and great lucky draw prizes. The price is 238 yuan per person plus 15 percent service charge. **Where:** 2 Chaoyangmen Beidajie **Open:** 6-10 pm **Tel:** 6553 2288 ext. 2127



#### Aria, China World Hotel

Aria has prepared an elegant six-course set menu including pan-fried turbot and charmoula roast rack of lamb for Valentine's night. Chocolate fondue and *petite fours* desserts also included, all for 888 yuan for a couple. **Where:** 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie **Open:** 6-10 pm **Tel:** 6505 2266 ext. 36



#### Magical Valentine's at Shangri-La Hotel

The Valentine's Day package at the newly renovated Shangri-La Hotel offers the chance to truly live like a prince and princess for an evening, for the total price of 19,999 yuan. One lucky couple will be picked up at home by limousine and served French champagne and fresh strawberries on route to the hotel, where they will be greeted by a spray of 99 red roses. Next comes a dinner in the flower-filled Spring Pavilion Chinese restaurant, including a five-course set meal with unlimited champagne and imported wine. The indulgence peaks with dessert, called "Diamonds Are Forever" – a decadent treat hiding a real diamond. Other perks include massages, a heart-shaped Valentine's Day cake, silk nightgown and pajamas on the bed, special breakfast served to the suite and limousine service back home. **Where:** 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian **Tel:** 6841 2211



#### Romantic Dinner with a View

The Banquet Hall of the Beijing Hotel is offering a premier five-course dinner for 1,388 yuan per couple. The evening includes live music and one glass of champagne along with the usual magnificent views of central Beijing from the highest building in the inner city. **Where:** 18th Floor, Building A, 33 Dongchang'an Jie, Dongcheng **Open:** 6-9 pm **Tel:** 6513 7766 ext. 288/388



#### Danieli's Restaurant, The St. Regis

For 1,888 yuan per couple, indulge in a six-course Valentine feast including a glass of Veuve Clicquot Champagne and imported wine. **Where:** 21 Jianguomenwai Dajie Chaoyang **Open:** 6-10 pm **Tel:** 6460 6688 ext. 2431

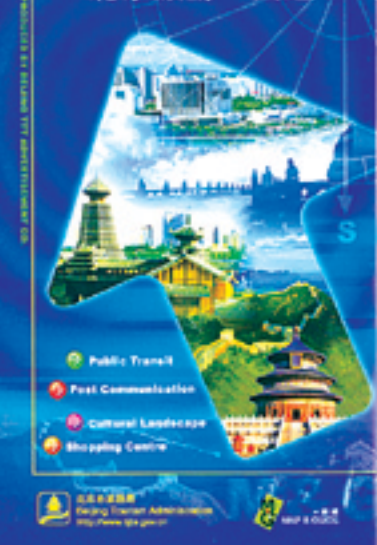


# 外国人

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## BEIJING ALL-IN-ONE MAP FOR TOURISM

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## Services

### Yellow Book for Expats Published

The Foreign Affairs Office of the Beijing Municipal Government has issued the capital's first Handbook for Foreigners Living in Beijing. The pocket guide book not only gives a detailed introduction to Beijing but also covers all aspects in which a foreigner might encounter trouble in the daily life. A Beijing map in English is also included with the book, giving information about tourism, entertainment, dining and hotels. The handbook, 25 yuan, is now available at all branches of Xinhua Bookstore and major hotels.

## Activities

### Mosque Tour

Chinese Culture Club is organizing a visit to Niujiu Mosque in the Muslim quarter in the south of Beijing, and to the China Buddhism College in nearby Fayuan Temple. An English-speaking guide and temple officials will explain the historical and cultural aspects of the area.

Where: Meet in front of the Niujiu Mosque, Guang'anmen Neidajie When: February 15, 2-4:30 pm Admission: 40 yuan (includes tickets) Tel: 8462 2081

## Stage

### Celestial Human World

It has been said that two couples planning to divorce decided to save their marriages after watching the drama Celestial Human World. A drama filled with witty dialogue, and credited with the power to rekindle the flames of love.

Where: Tianqiao Theater, Beiwei Lu, Xuanwu When: February 13-14, 7:30 pm Admission: 50-280 yuan Tel: 8315 6300

### Love Box

Kong Kong Dance Studio presents a dance show revealing four different love stories using body language. They promise to "open boxes of love" on stage.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park, Tian'anmen Square When: February 14, 7:30 pm Admission: 50-380 yuan Tel: 6559 8285

## Movies

### Local Husband, Immigrant Wife

Directed by Gao Zhisen, starring Eric Tsang and Shen Dianxia. A Guangzhou family goes through a series of conflicts thanks to three daughters-in-law from different parts of China with different culture and customs. In Chinese.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian When: from February 14 Admission: 40, 50 yuan Tel: 8211 2851 Cell Phone (Shou Ji)

Directed by Feng Xiaogang, starring Ge You, Zhang Guoli, Xu Fan, Fan Bing-Bing. Popular TV host Yan Shouyi (Ge You) has it all: a great job, a loyal wife and a gorgeous young lover. He depends on his cell phone to keep his world organized... Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang When: February 21-22, 8 pm Admission: 50 yuan Tel: 13901134745

## Music

### In the Mood for Love

Beijing Youth Symphony Wind Band will celebrate Valentine's Day with a concert conducted by Nicholas Smith. The programs include music from *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Sound of Music* and other romantic favorites.

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park, Tian'anmen Square When: February 14, 2 pm Admission: 30-100 yuan Tel: 6559 8285

### Movie Romance

Musicians of the Orchestra of China Opera and Dance Theater will present love-themed film music to celebrate Valentine's Day. The program includes *The Voice of Spring*, *The Blue Danube*, *Butterfly Lovers* and the themes from *Love Story*, *Gone With Wind*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Titanic*.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie Admission: 99-1,599 yuan When: February 14, 7:30 pm Tel: 6506 5345

### Lighting Your Fire

The Light Music Troupe of China Song and Dance Ensemble features a variety show filled with songs and dances to mark Valentine's Day. Program includes *Beautiful Spanish Maiden*, *Moscow Nights*, *Going Home* and *Yesterday*.

Where: China National Library Concert Hall, Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian When: February 14, 7:30 pm Admission: 70-280 yuan Tel: 8854 5501

### Variety Is Spice of Love

Drama, songs and dances, pop and classical music will be put in a "salad bowl" as part of a variety show to cater to lovers on Valentine's Day. Young artists from China Central Drama Institute will stage two short dramas, *Take Off the Mask of Love* and *To Love You Only Needs Ten Scores*. Pop singer Huang Shan and others will perform. Tunes include *Fond of You*, *Memory* and more.

Where: Nationality Cultural Palace Theatre, Xidan When: February 14, 7:30 pm Admission: 180-480 yuan Tel: 6602 2530

### Heartfelt Tunes

A concert featuring vocal and film music by China National Symphony Orchestra Chorus and Beijing Film Symphony Orchestra.

Program includes *My Heart Will Go On*, *Unchained Melody*, *A Half Moon Climbing Up*, *Waiting You Till Tomorrow*.

Where: Century Theatre, Liangmaqiao Lu When: February 14, 7:30 pm Admission: 111-999 yuan Tel: 6466 0032

## The Pianist

Directed by Roman Polanski, starring Adrien Brody, Thomas Kretschmann and Emilia Fox. A brilliant pianist who is also a Polish Jew escapes deportation to a Nazi labor camp and eludes capture by hiding in the ruins of Warsaw during World War II. In English.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian When: from February 20 Admission: 60 yuan Tel: 8211 2851

## Exhibitions

### New Beginning

Melodic Gallery is staging an exhibition to welcome the new spring. A total of 12 artists will participate, bringing their latest works to portray life and people.

Where: Melodic Gallery, 14 Ji'anwai Dajie, opposite the Friendship Store When: February 15 - March 31, 9 am - 5 pm Admission: free Tel: 6515 8123 Feb 14-29

### Women and Sex

On Valentine's Day feminist artists Chen Lingyang, Song Dong and Yin Zhaoyang exhibit their installation pieces.

Where: Today Art Gallery, 9 Wenhuiyuan Beilu When: February 14-29, 9 am - 5 pm Tel: 6221 6146

### Best Woodcuts

Woodcuts by Wang Qi, Gao Rongsheng, Liang Dong, Song Yang, Zheng Xuhua and Wang Huaxiang; copper plate etchings by Wang Weixin and Lin Tong and stone carvings by Wu Changjiang. Some of their works have been collected in museums in France, Germany and Britain.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Enjoy Paradise, Huaweili, north of Beijing Curio City When: February 19-29, 9:30 am - 7 pm Admission: free Tel: 8779 0458

### Unearthed Treasure

Bronze culture relics unearthed in Yunnan Province are on display. This ancient bronze ware is widely distributed in over 70 counties and cities in Yunnan, where the Dian culture is praised as one of the wonders of China. The exhibition features many precious national-level relics.

Where: National Museum of China, east side of Tian'anmen Square When: until March 25, 9 am - 4:30 pm Tel: 6512 8321

## Jams

### Rock 'n' Romance

Some local heavy-hitters including Convenience Store (Bianli Shangdian), Sand (Shazi), PK-14, SUBS and Shanghai band Su-fei Garden will warm every corner on Valentine's Day. February 18 Second Hand Rose will perform their special brand of Dongbei rock.

Where: Nameless Highland, Yayuncun, Anhuili Area 1, Building 14 When: 9 pm Admission: 30 yuan Tel: 6489 1613

### Airtight Party

Filter Production presents "Airtight" Party on Valentine's Day with DJ Iain Taylor. Dance with Iain's break-beat and house at Cloud Nine.

Where: Jiuxiao Club, Sanlitun Beijie, near Jixiang Restaurant When: 10 pm - 4 am Admission: 80 yuan or special 100 yuan for couples Tel: 13901154121

## Language Exchange

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By Guo Yuandan

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# A Taste of Tibet in Gansu



The main prayer hall of Labrang Monastery

Photo provided by Photocom

By Su Wei

Perched on the eastern edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture offers visitors a real taste of Tibet, without the associated risks of high altitude travel!

There are scores of Tibetan temples in this region. Two of the best known are Labrang and Langmusi, both of which attract a steady stream of pilgrims throughout the year.

## Labrang Monastery

Meaning “monks’ palace,” Labrang Monastery (拉卜楞寺) stands on a hill above the Daxia River, in the town of Xiahe (夏河). One of the six main monasteries of the Gelugpa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the entire architectural complex covers an area of over 400,000 square meters.

The monastery was originally built in 1,709 by E'angzongzhe, the first generation living Buddha. Since then, it has seen numerous restorations and enlargements. Today, Labrang forms a huge monastery complex, with 108 temples, six colleges (zha cang), and scores of temple halls.

The six colleges are Mayjung Tosamling, for the study of sutras and debate; Dukor Dratsang or Kalachakra College for the study of certain rituals, astronomy, astrology and mathematics; Menpa Dratsang or Medical College; Kyedor Dratsang for the study of the Hevajra and Vajrapani Mahachakra rituals and the annual preparation of the Buddhist almanac; Gyuto Dratsang, or Upper Tantric College; and Maygyu Dratsang, or Lower Tantric College.

The architectural style is a mixture of Tibetan and imperial Chinese, and every structure is crowned with a golden roof. The walls of the temple halls are covered with murals depicting Buddhist stories.

As the biggest Tibetan Buddhist College in China, Labrang has a collection of over 60,000 volumes of valuable scriptures.

A fire in 1985 in the prayer hall of Mayjung Tosamling destroyed countless Buddhist scriptures and melted many of the statues, but the hall has since been reconstructed and most of the precious relics replaced.

There is a strong smell of butter inside the buildings, from the butter sculptures. Butter sculptures are made by filling a carved wooden mould with butter (generally yak butter). The resulting piece, usually a flower, an auspicious animal or a scene of religious significance, is then painted and decorated.

Like any other Tibetan monastery, large Thangkas are displayed inside each hall. Typically brightly colored, Thangkas are usually in the form of a scroll, around 75 centimeters long and 50 centimeters wide. There are also “banner style” Thangkas, which are generally 1.1 meters long and 3.5 meter wide.

In the southern corner of the monastery stands the Gongtang Pagoda (贡唐宝塔). This is a 31-meter-high five-story structure, with a pinnacle crowned with sun, moon and star shaped decorations. On the facade are eight gold-plated Buddhas in relief. Inside, there is a collection of more than 20,000 volumes of Buddhist sutras on the second floor and 1,032 bronze Buddha statues on the third floor. There are also over one hundred vivid murals preserved in the pagoda.

Of the over 2,000 lamas in the Labrang Monastery, around half belong to the monastery. The rest have come from other monasteries to study.

Some of these students act as tour guides after their morning classes, and resume their studies in the evening.

Breakfast and lunch for the monks usually consists of *tsampa* (ground, dry-fried barley) mixed with yak butter and *momo* (baked bread). Dinner entails either a visit to one of the restaurants in town or noodles with some fried vegetables.

As in Tibet, lamas and pilgrims circumambulate, or



Spinning prayer wheels at Labrang Monastery



Celestial burial at Langmusi



Dengqing Wangmu is dressed up to visit her relatives on the first day of the lunar New Year.



Kajiao Zhuma blesses her son in a ritual ceremony on Spring Festival eve. Photos by Su Wei

walk clockwise around, the various halls of the temple as a ritual of worship.

Many lamas brighten up their simple rooms with bunches of brightly colored plastic flowers, and invariably, a portrait of Jamyang, the abbot of the monastery, is hung prominently on one of the walls.

Lamas there can eat mutton, provided it is slaughtered according to certain prescribed rituals and they do not witness the slaughter.

## Langmu Monastery

Around 90 kilometers south of Luqu (碌曲), the county seat, is the town of Namu, or Langmusi (郎木寺).

Langmusi is actually a group of Tibetan monasteries scattered around the valley, known collectively as Langmu, or “fairy” Monastery.

Lamas at Langmusi can frequently be seen dining at local restaurants, and *jiagongmian* (noodles with yak meat) and *guoziyu* (fish stewed in a pot) seem to be favorites.

Langmu Monastery is well known for the practice of celestial, or sky burial, in which the body of the dead is dismembered and fed to birds of prey. According to Tibetan Buddhist belief, celestial burial is the most auspicious method of burial, and can help the deceased obtain a good re-birth.

According to tradition, the deceased is stripped, placed in a fetal position and encased in a white cloth. Three days later, a celestial burial master takes charge of the body. First a fire is lit to attract the attention of the birds. Then the body is dismembered with a ritual knife. The flesh is cut into pieces and the bones crushed and mixed with roast barley, all of which is then fed to the birds.

If the birds refuse to eat someone's body, it means he or she must have been a vicious person, and will have a bad re-birth.

## New Year Festivities

The Tibetan people celebrate both the Chinese New Year and Monlam, a Tibetan festival that falls

during the first month of the lunar New Year.

People usually eat common dishes, but they are served according to a fixed order. First, yak butter tea is served, followed by *huicai* (stewed mutton with carrots, doufu and celery), followed by *juemaifan* (rice steamed in a special gourd-shaped container with two butter and sugar). Then mutton, *momo* and Tibetan *baozi* (steamed buns filled with chopped mutton).

After the family meal, people visit friends, relatives and neighbors, taking gifts of biscuits, candy and fruit. Older Tibetan people usually give children money as a gift, as they do elsewhere in China.

## Getting there:

There are daily flights from Beijing to Lanzhou (兰州). Otherwise train K43 from Beijing Railway Station or T76 from Beijing West Railway Station to Lanzhou costs around 360 yuan and takes 24 hours. From Lanzhou, it is a five-hour bus trip to Xiahe (44.5 yuan). Buses depart Lanzhou from the south bus station (兰州汽车南站) daily. There are buses from Xiahe to Hezuo (合作) (9 yuan). To get to Langmu Monastery, take the Hezuo - Diebu (迭部) bus (20 yuan), and get off at Langmusi.

## Tips:

The living Buddha can be visited by arrangement with the lamas. A hada, a silk scarf, usually white and a cash offering are the appropriate gifts if you are granted an audience. The living Buddha may return the hada with a knot or give some other object as a blessing. Although the living Buddhas for the most part speak only Tibetan, the lamas who serve them will often serve as interpreters.

While August is the best time for sightseeing, winter is a good time to witness some of the local customs. Some hotels and restaurants are closed during winter, however, and the average temperature in winter is -12°C.